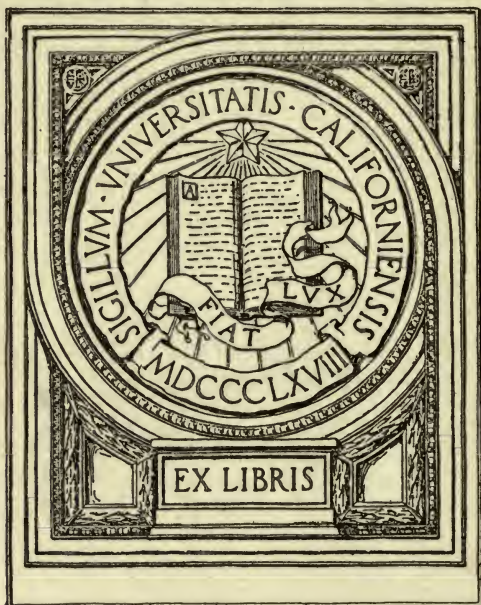


THE RELATIONS OF  
FRENCH & ENGLISH  
SOCIETY

(1763-1793)

C. H. LOCKITT

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(1763-1793)

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TO  
MY WIFE  
TO WHOSE CONSTANT SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT  
THIS WORK  
OWED ITS INCEPTION AND ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT



## PREFACE

THIS little book was the fruit of much assiduous endeavour; and it succeeded in its immediate aim. I have hesitated long in deciding to publish it, and under University Regulations it appears as it was written nine years ago. I think that at the time of its composition I had somewhat the sensation of a batsman who is "set": the ball loomed large before my eyes. It is possible, therefore, that I have overrated the influence of the friendship; yet, with the maturer judgment that time brings, I remain convinced that its conclusions are true in the main, and that, in any study of the genesis of the French Revolution, the association of the two aristocracies cannot be ignored. I trust that the book will be found to possess some interest now that the continued friendship of the two nations seems a vital necessity for Europe, and that forbearance with the faults of his work will be generously extended to one who regards himself as a better schoolmaster than scholar.

My thanks are due to my friend and colleague, Mr. A. P. Whitaker, M.A. (Oxon.), for his help with the proofs—no light boon amid the distractions of a school term.

C. H. LOCKITT.

*Bungay School,  
June 1920.*



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# THE RELATIONS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH SOCIETY (1763-1793)

## INTRODUCTION

THE exact measure of the influence exerted by Englishmen in preparing the French Revolution is a somewhat indeterminate quantity which must to a great extent depend upon the view adopted as to the true significance of that event. Why was the French Revolution such a stupendous event? And why did its principles infect all Europe? Because the French Revolution was more than a shuffle of the constitutional cards; because it was the expression of a new attitude of man to man, a revolt against the artificiality and hardness of the mediæval system, and a precursor of nineteenth-century Socialism. At the heart of it, as Morley says, is a new way of understanding life. There was no country of western Europe that remained untouched by the new ideals that mankind was setting before itself, and because England was the only country in Europe where thought was free, it was here that men laid the foundations of these ideals. What England really effects during this century is the application of the individual judgment to the problems of the political world, and of the scientific spirit to those of philosophy, a process which must lead to the adoption of the new ideals, and was necessarily hostile to the protective monarchy of the old régime. Condorcet says of Voltaire that he came to England a poet and returned from it a sage. It transformed the author of the *Lettres Persanes*

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V and the *Temple de Gnide* into the philosopher of *Considérations sur la Grandeur et Décadence des Romains* and of *L'Esprit des Lois*. Between 1763 and 1789 there was hardly a prominent man of letters in France who did not either visit England or mix with Englishmen; there was hardly a noble at the Court of Louis XVI of whom the same cannot be said. What, then, must have been the effect on them of a nation that could so deeply influence Voltaire and Montesquieu? Let us glance at the history of Lauraguais, most gallant and light-hearted of men, developing by association with England into the author of the *Lettre . . . à M. Necker* and *Du droit des Français*, or of Noailles, gaily casting aside the feudal privileges of his ancestors; or of Brissot the enthusiast, returning thence the revolutionary. And all these men were "Anglomanes." If we can thus see the effect in certain chosen cases, we may justly conclude, I think, that the association with England produced an equal effect on others, whose names, even, are unknown to us.

The exact influence of the philosophers in preparing the Revolution is a question which has been much discussed; the remorse of Raynal and Morellet shows that they, at any rate, believed themselves to be in part responsible; Robespierre and his followers openly put into practice their reading of Rousseau's doctrines. But Man is, after all, a conservative animal; and for the accepted routine of generations to be thus uprooted and torn away from the minds of the generality of mankind, it needs more than philosophical arguments, more than halcyon pictures of unknown lands, however eminent the author. Granted that Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau came at the psychological moment when, in the restless growth of knowledge, men's reason rebelled against the unreasonableness of the social structure, yet one cannot help feeling that the words of the destroyers would have fallen on deaf ears if the constant visiting of England, and America's successful resistance to oppression, had not disclosed to French Society the practical application of their theories. The little cottages and gardens that met

the eye of the traveller through Kent, the universal cleanliness and the general air of well-being which fifty years of agricultural prosperity had summoned into life, impressed with a sense of the advantages of political liberty the Frenchman who had but just left the misery and wretchedness of his own country. He saw that freedom which the philosopher laboured to establish as his ideal in the rapidity of the public service of coaches, in the constant interest in life of the English nobility, in the toleration of religious sects; in fact he came to England prepared to see in everything the consequences of constitutional government. In America he measured the liberty of each State by the prosperity it enjoyed, by the simplicity of its manners, by the homeliness of its attire, by everything he did not know in France, and it is in this sense that the acquaintance with England, by supplying outward and visible evidence of the value of the ideas of the writers, manured the soil to render it fruitful. "Oh, my friend," wrote the Abbé Coyer, a visitor to England, "since these people despoiled us in the two Indies and in Africa, we have taken from them many things—their gardens, their Vauxhall, their Ranelagh, their dark dramas and their terrible comedies, their wisk, their punch, their horse-races, their jackets and their wages," idle borrowings in themselves, but fraught with many consequences, and it is my aim in the present thesis to trace the effect of the Anglomania in defining, in developing, and in stamping with some of its peculiar trademarks the revolutionary spirit. In a curious production, entitled *Memorial for Me, by Me*, intended for the delectation of Society, Lauraguais describes the various types of visitor to England, but for our present purpose we may roughly divide them into two, the frivolous and the enthusiast. For the frivolous, association with the English aristocracy, whose vices were coarse and licentious, whose gambling was high and whose follies were great, could but degrade them. They followed the fashion because it was the fashion; and lightly and airily adopted English habits without a moment's thought of the

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consequences of ingrafting on the French the customs of a nation whose outlook on life was wholly different. But there were many enthusiasts in France who envied the life of an English peer, who sighed for freedom of thought and speech, and deliberately adopted English habits as the expression of their wishes. In Chapter III, which follows the preliminary chapters, I endeavour to trace the growth of English methods of dress, and the introduction into France of the English horse-racing, gambling and club life, with its inevitable separation of the sexes. The consequences were, it seems to me, the development of the idea of equality among men, and the disappearance of the airs and graces and of the traditions of urbanity which in 1763 rendered French Society the most polished in the world. With the loss of these characteristic features of social life, the ground is prepared for the most disgraceful aspect of the Revolution. Honeycombed with vices as French Society was, it needed but the loss of its polish, the cloak that hid its inward rottenness, to degenerate into the most vicious social order the world had yet seen.

In Chapter IV the various changes in taste are discussed as tending to bring the classes into closer contact, the love of amateur acting, the rage for masquerades, the zest for all that savoured of mystery and magic. If a man is inclined to any course of action, the discovery that his neighbour has embarked on the same course confirms him in his resolution; and the fact that these aspects of Society are but parts of the general movement of the century, and are to be found in every country, gave an additional impulse to them in France. Yet what proved innocuous in England, proved damaging to the more rigid scale of social etiquette which the traditions of Paris accepted. One taste many Frenchmen certainly did acquire from England, the taste for heavy tragedy, and though perhaps the effect on the literary history of France of the popularity of English drama was not as permanent as that produced by the comedy of homely types, yet it served to blunt the edge of the finer feelings of

the populace. Ducis, it is said, was silent during the Terror, for—the expression is his own—tragedy was walking the streets.

Most writers on the antecedents of the Revolution have pointed out the change that occurred between 1750–1760 on the ground of the attacks on the established order, the State replacing the Church as the object of attack. The influence of Rousseau in developing the conception of the sovereignty of the people is undoubtedly great, yet I endeavour in Chapter V to support the contention that the influence of England was a considerable factor in drawing attention to Rousseau's ideas. There is abundant evidence to prove that the nobility who began the Revolution were greatly attracted by the English system, that they envied the superior opportunities of an English peer, and that the fundamental principles of English law were almost daily introduced to the knowledge of the French by journals and publications, by conversation with members of the Lower House, and by their own observations in England. In 1787 most Frenchmen believed that the introduction of some such system could readily be effected; it was the enormous outburst of political discussion, and the crowd of political pamphlets that followed the Assembly of the notables—and particularly during the fatal hesitancy of the three orders to verify their powers in common—that led to the contempt of the English system observed by Young and other travellers in France. One other aspect of the French mind is worth attention. The attack on the Church ceased with the middle of the century, and at the time that the association with England reached the imitative stage, the religious beliefs of French Society were scanty indeed. We know that Voltaire and Diderot drew their ideas from the English deists of the earlier part of the century, and they probably associated liberalism in politics with latitudinarian views in religion. Compared with French Society, Englishmen were religious, and it would not *prima facie* be probable that mixing with our countrymen would impede or accelerate

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the destruction of religion in France. There is, however, this much to be said: to the logical French intellect the arguments against religion appeared incontrovertible, and many naturally assumed that in countries like Great Britain and America, which their imagination peopled with philosophers possessed of unbounded liberty of thought, no man in his sane senses could retain a shred of religious belief. Except from this point of view, it is difficult to understand why, when England was imitated in almost every respect, the religious revival that was regenerating English Society did not, to some extent, redeem the French nation from its atheistic tendencies.

In Chapter VI the last aspect of the friendship is discussed. The development of a "sensibility" is the form in which the revolt against feudal traditions is most clearly marked, and as such is a characteristic of the age elsewhere. Its prophet is Rousseau, and just as his political influence was confirmed by the British model, so was his sentimental influence strengthened by the friendship of his readers with the English nobility, and by the popularity of Richardson and Sterne. Either he or the English—or, rather, both acting together—drove the French back to their estates and to the enjoyment of the wilder beauties of Nature, aided, it must be confessed, by the exile of Parlement and the stoppage of payment at what was really the crucial moment, 1769; Fielding and Richardson excited an interest in private life, enjoying a popularity which *La Nouvelle Héloïse* confirmed, and of which the ultimate consequence was the philanthropic movement of the golden age of manners. These are the signs of the revolutionary spirit, and these are fostered in France by the example of a country where the new conceptions had had freedom to expand. Regarded in this light, the association plays an undoubted part in the promotion of the Revolution in its widest sense, but other and more direct consequences are to be seen in one of these movements—the return to the country, which showed the country curés and the mass of the peasantry

the degradation of the nobility for whose benefit their lives were rendered miserable.

Perhaps the surest proof of the effect which the association has had is in the remarkable similarity that can be traced between the France of 1789 and the England of 1770. There is the same coarseness of manners and looseness of morals, the same intense earnestness of the political conversations, the same violence of debate, the same brutality in the mob. Nor has England changed much in the interval: Society, under the influence of French duchesses, may have become more finicking, more "sensible"; the nation, under the influence of the evangelical revival, more religious; the merchants, as a consequence of the Commercial Treaty, more prosperous; but the essential elements have remained unchanged. Why, then, did the infectious doctrines of the French School prove so innocuous as we must consider they were during those months of energetic proselytising in 1792? The heart of the nation was sound—the revolutionary characteristics, it must be remembered, came after, and not before, the possession of liberty of thought and action—and by gradual fusion with existing institutions modern England was created without the violent upheaval of the remnants of the past. In all the political contests of these thirty years in England there was no class that was really discontented with the existing system, and thus the Wilkes riots, though apparently menacing to the existing authorities, were less serious in their consequences than the constant quarrels of the Parlements of France with the King.

In Chapter VII I have endeavoured to compare the society of England with that of France, and thence to explain the failure of the revolutionary propaganda in this country.

There is a further aspect of the friendship in connection with the period 1789-1793, in its relationship to the war which followed. Two causes seem to have accentuated the bitterness with which the war was supported on the English side. The heads of Government and Opposition alike had

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lived in the closest and most cordial friendship with men whom they now saw exiled, and in poverty and distress, and from whom they heard vivid details of the massacre of others in Paris. Secondly, it was a war of conceptions, each fighting for its ideal of freedom. England, which had disseminated the ideas, repudiated the deductions the French had drawn therefrom, and in the face of Europe declared that the Jacobin doctrines were not liberty, but licence.

The literature of the subject of this thesis is immense; the writing of memoirs was a favourite task of that self-satisfied age, and it is still sufficiently recent for letters and official documents to be available in large quantities. I have acknowledged in the footnotes the sources of most of my statements, and a list of the works mainly consulted accompanies the thesis. Many of the politicians of the years 1784-1789 viewed with considerable distrust the rapid progress of English modes and habits of thought, but as far as I know no complete view of the English influence exists, the nearest approach to one that I have found being in J. J. Jusserand's *Shakespeare in France in the Ancient Régime*, which, however, limits itself to a brief statement of the other changes, with a fuller account of the English drama in France. I have added as an appendix lists of the principal visitors to England and to France. The lists make no pretension to completeness, and have been culled in the course of my reading, but they are, I think, sufficiently full to demonstrate to the hilt the statements contained in Chapter I. The subject is an ambitious one, and the only excuse that I have for offering it as a first essay in historical criticism is the hope that it may be found to contribute its mite to that thorough investigation of the social changes preceding the Revolution which Buckle has declared to be essential to its full understanding.

## CHAPTER I

### THE "CROSSING-OVER AND FIGURING IN"

THE extravagant splendour of the Court of Versailles, the unbroken traditions of the most polished Society the world had yet known, the opportunities which Paris gave for the enjoyment of intellectual pleasure or of more frivolous delights, the beauty and interest of its public buildings, and the cosmopolitan hospitality<sup>1</sup> of its inhabitants, made the French capital a city of perennial charm for the whole of Europe. The existence of this attraction is frequently expressed in the correspondence of the day, so emphatically as to leave no doubt of the sincerity of the writers. "They are indeed," writes Lady Hervey, "a charming people inhabiting a delightful country. Oh, that my lot had fallen in that fair ground! I had then a goodly heritage."<sup>2</sup> Paris was the sightseer's paradise: "I devoted many hours of the morning to the circuit of Paris and the neighbourhood, to the visit of churches and palaces conspicuous by their architecture, to the royal manufactures, collections of books and pictures—all the various treasures of art, of learning, and of luxury,"<sup>3</sup> says Gibbon. Paris was the home of polite manners: Sir Gilbert Elliot sends his sons to be educated in the hope that their native simplicity and elevation of mind may be "tempered by the acquisition of some of those graces which spread such an inexpressible charm through those societies where even you are not ashamed to pass so many precious hours."<sup>4</sup> The social intercourse of Paris was unrivalled: the life of the *salons* and the total

<sup>1</sup> The hospitality of Paris, Jefferson says, "is beyond anything I had conceived to be practicable in a large city" (Vol. I. p. 91).

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Eminent Persons to Hume*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*: compare Lady Mary Coke's visits in her *Journals*, and Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. IX. pp. 73-93.

<sup>4</sup> Burton's *Life of Hume*.

absence of any serious interest in life had produced a capacity for devising amusement, had perfected, as Hume says, that "art the most useful and agreeable of any, *l'art de vivre*, the art of Society and conversation." "King and privileged excel only in one point, *savoir vivre*, good taste, good tone, the gift of talking gracefully with skill and gaiety, the art of transforming life into a brilliant and ingenious fête, as if the world was a *salon* of brilliant idlers, to whom it was sufficient to be witty and amiable."<sup>1</sup> With Paris possessed of these varied attractions and charms, it is not surprising that, when the peace of 1763 had once more opened to our countrymen the door of foreign travel, and when England's victorious career during the war had given it a new consideration in the eyes of Europe, they flocked there, some for a temporary holiday, some for shopping, and some making it a halting-place in the "grand tour."<sup>2</sup> At first they do not, except in rare cases, appear to have readily obtained the *entrée* into the *salons* of Paris; some few, like Lady Mary Hervey or Hume, were already in correspondence with the leaders of French Society, the first from her long and well-known affection for all things French, the latter from his literary achievements, his *History* being already one of the most popular books in France. Lady Mary Hervey herself writes: "Paris is overrun by swarms of English, who are not a little troublesome to such of their country people who are much in the best French company."<sup>3</sup> Evidently the English came in crowds, for we find Walpole asserting much the same thing in much the same words: "There are swarms of English here, but most of them know not Joseph, and Joseph does not desire to know them."<sup>4</sup> Those who, like Selwyn, Walpole, and March, were intro-

<sup>1</sup> Taine, p. 523.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent account of an English lady of title's life in Paris, see Lady Mary Coke's *Journal*, Vol. II. pp. 115-121, Vol. III. pp. 229-233 and 397-403, Vol. IV. pp. 69-83 and 331-359.

Cf. Pope—

"He sauntered Europe round,  
And gathered every vice in every ground" (*Dunciad*).

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* of Lady Mary Hervey.

<sup>4</sup> Jesse, *Selwyn*, Vol. II. p. 8.

duced under the ægis of Lady Mary Hervey, were readily accepted by French Society, and had "business for every night";<sup>1</sup> but those who were unknown found it difficult to penetrate the barrier. "The Duke and Duchess of Northumberland dined five nights a week by themselves," we read, and Adam Smith begged Hume's assistance in getting the young Duke of Buccleuch into good society. Even as late as 1769, nine-tenths of the English visitors failed to get into good company.<sup>2</sup> As soon as the ice was broken, however, acquaintances multiplied, according to Gibbon, "and their new-found friends were delighted to find them others newer still."<sup>3</sup> There was one other source of popularity. French Society, ever seeking relief from ennui, delighted in honouring those who by their mental gifts—or their mental freaks—distinguished themselves from their fellows. "I know no place," wrote Hume, "where money is so little requisite to a man distinguished by birth or by personal qualities."<sup>4</sup> It needed but "to lose an eye or a tooth," to perpetrate a successful pasquinade, as Walpole did, or to possess a reputation for wit, for an Englishman to become the fashion. To such an extent did the passion for travelling increase, that it was estimated that within two years from the peace no less than 40,000 English had passed through Calais,<sup>5</sup> and among these visitors to France we find many well-known names. As the circle widened, Englishmen visiting Paris found it easier to make friends among the noblesse or financiers, and the more friends they made, the more they were induced to go. It has been said that it was during the embassy of Lord Stormont (1772-1778) that mutual esteem between the members of the two nations commences; certainly the visitors were

<sup>1</sup> Jesse, *Selwyn*, Vol. I. p. 272. For Walpole's large circle of friends see the *Memoirs*, Vol. II. pp. 168-180.

<sup>2</sup> Moore, *View of Society in France*, 1769.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Lewisham, writing in 1775, says, "When one is introduced one has regularly the *entrée* on the visiting nights" (*Dartmouth MSS.*, Dec. 22, 1775).

<sup>4</sup> Burton's *Life of Hume*.

<sup>5</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIV. p. 246.

more numerous after that time. Lady Mary Coke in 1770 was present at a dinner of Lord Harcourt's, where there were eighteen, all English; <sup>1</sup> General Conway in 1774 made ninety acquaintances in a few weeks; <sup>2</sup> Fox, who paid several visits, was to be seen at the houses of those who particularly welcomed the English, and found the younger members of the French aristocracy, men like Lauzun, Fitzjames and Guémenée, quite congenial companions; Garrick went, and established a friendship with the leading members of the French stage; Adam Smith talked political economy with Turgot, and Dr. Burney music with L'Abbé Arnaud; Wilkes displayed to the French nobility the vices of an English Macaroni, and enjoyed the agreeable parties of Holbach, Helvetius and Pelletier; Fitzpatrick showed them how to gamble; Shelburne learnt economics from Morellet, and dazzled Mlle. de l'Espinasse with the opportunities of an English nobleman; General Burgoyne visited Choiseul at Chanteloup; the Duchess of Northumberland paid court to Mme. du Barry and "received great honours from the King of France"; Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire" excited Mme. du Deffand and her circle with the charms of English beauty! <sup>3</sup> The letters of his old blind friend to Walpole prove how close was the connection that existed by 1766 between the two societies. "To-morrow is my Sunday, when your ambassadors can come if they like." "I will send you for supper, rice, chicken, fresh eggs—in a word, anything you care for." "I shall have to supper twenty persons, among others Mr. St. John, who brings me tea, sticking-plaster and a letter from Selwyn." "I have seen Mr. Fox, and we have already supped three times together." "The Spencers will go on Monday or Tuesday to Hautefontaine to the Archbishop of Narbonne, then to

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, Vol. III. p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Madame du Deffand to Horace Walpole*, Jan. 3, 1775.

<sup>3</sup> Fox's visits can be followed in Jesse, *Madame du Deffand's Letters*, etc.; Garrick's in *Memoirs of Morellet*, *Garrick Correspondence*, *Memoirs of Garat*, *Davies' Life of Garrick*, and in the *Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*; Adam Smith's in Stephens' *Turgot* and in Burton's *Life of Hume*; for Wilkes' there are the *Correspondence* and *Garat*; for Shelburne's, *Morellet's*,

Liancourt, and then to Brussels to Madame D'Arembert." Passages like these—and their number is legion—emphasise how varied was the communication that existed, and how readily the English visitors were received in French Society. And if the English were welcomed in France, none the less were the French received, despite the rudeness of the mob,<sup>1</sup> in England. The works of Voltaire and Montesquieu had left the impression that the English were a nation of mental depth, at a time when every one in France must be a *géomètre* or a *philosophe*, and from the moment it was settled at Paris that the English were solid, as Walpole says, the French desired to see this wonderful people at home. From the date of Mme. de Boufflers' visit in 1763—she was the first French woman of distinction to set foot on our shores out of sheer curiosity—the nobility and *litterati* were eager to visit us. "The French," says Walpole, "resorted hither in considerable numbers. They visited the counties, and, under cover of studying commerce and manufactures, familiarised themselves with our weakness. A few of the new travellers even visited Ireland."<sup>2</sup> The list included such distinguished members of French Society as the Duc de Chartres, the Duc de Lauzun, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, the Comte de Lauraguais, the Duc de Nivernois, and the Marquis de la Fayette, and such philosophers as Holbach, Helvetius, Morellet, Raynal, Necker and Suard. They threw themselves into the amusements of London Society, visited Newmarket, witnessed Garrick, went to Ranelagh, and were present at masquerades and routs. Lauraguais spent half his time in England; Lauzun opened the ball at Lord Hertford's and Lord Stanley's;

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Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne* and *Letters* of Mlle. de l'Espinasse; Duchess of Devonshire's in Madame du Deffand's *Letters*; Dr. Burney, *Garrick Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 568. General Burgoyne's and Duchess of Northumberland's are in Lady Mary Coke's *Journal*, Vol. III.

Johnson's *Journal* of his visit is in Boswell's *Life*, Vol. II. pp. 383-404. Something of a list is attempted in Appendix A.

<sup>1</sup> Grosley records the troubles of La Condamine in the London streets.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole, *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 77. Lady Sarah Lennox writes in 1767, "London abounds in French." Walpole, in 1776, says, "We have coveys of foreigners, particularly French" (*Letters*, Vol. IX. p. 360).

La Fayette met Clinton at the opera before setting sail for America, and obtained a dinner at Lord Shelburne's by his spirited defence of the Americans; Raynal was fêted, except that Johnson turned his back on him; Holbach was disgusted; while Helvetius was eager to be friendly.<sup>1</sup> In the correspondence of the time, the English peerage, the Members of Parliament, the Court circle in France and the society of Mme. de Luxembourg, Mme. du Deffand, Mme. de Choiseul and the principal *salonières* of Paris seemed to form one society, alike in its amusements, its fashions and its dress, till one could hardly realise the imminence of the ensuing struggle.

On this society the outbreak of the American War came as a blow. The visits to England, which had become so necessary to the jaded spirits of the French nobility, were rudely interrupted; correspondence became difficult, but the friendship was sufficiently well established for it to resist the shock. Of all the wars between England and France, probably none has been carried on in such an amicable spirit, or with as much regard to international courtesy as this. It was popular in France: French pride was still suffering from the humiliations of the Seven Years' War: its prestige in Europe had waned. Writing in 1772 to Mann, Walpole remarks, "What do you think of the insults offered to France, where the partition treaty was not even notified?"<sup>2</sup> That France should regain her place among the European nations was the patriotic ambition of every Frenchman, but though war with England was necessary to effect this desirable end, it did not follow that personal ties need be broken, and moreover, the acquaintance had given the French a respect for those who were political enemies but social friends. It

<sup>1</sup> Morellet gives a detailed account of his visit (*Memoirs*); for Mme. de Boufflers', see Jesse, Vol. I. pp. 233 *et seq.*, and Walpole, *Letters*; for La Fayette see *Memoirs*; for Holbach, *Lettres de Diderot à Mlle. Voland*; for Raynal, Jesse, Vol. III. p. 369, and posthumous works of Mrs. Chapone. He received the greatest compliment in that the House of Commons interrupted their debates in order that a better seat for him should be found.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Sorel: "France, reputed the first power of Europe, was hardly decreed a place among the second. To replace it in its rank it was necessary to beat down the English supremacy."

was not a severance of the intercourse, but an interruption. Instances of mutual consideration abound. When Selwyn applied, through his friend Mme. Cambis, for a passport, the Minister replied: "The English may come, stay and go without experiencing any difficulty."<sup>1</sup> Walpole writes, "Though at war with France, neither country takes much notice of it" (September 1778).<sup>2</sup> Mme. de Mirepoix cannot do without her English tea, and Mme. de Beauvau must have English locks.<sup>3</sup> The letters of Walpole throughout the war still contain the social news of Paris, and the Duchess de Polignac—the friend of Marie Antoinette—writes to Lord Clermont that preliminaries of peace are signed (1782).<sup>4</sup> The Duc de Lauzun has a personal interview of a most cordial nature with George III after the declaration of war, and receives permission to continue his stay in England.<sup>5</sup> An ordinance of the French monarch excluded Captain Cook's vessel, then on its way home from a voyage of discovery, from the common usages of war, and Lord Macartney, captured at Grenada, was released on the application of his English friends through Mme. du Deffand.<sup>6</sup> While a prisoner he stayed with the Bishop of Limoges, and Arthur Young has recorded the gracious act of that prelate, who postponed the public celebration of the victory in order to spare the feelings of his guest.<sup>7</sup> In a similar way the Abbé Raynal's friendship with Lord Mansfield procured the release of his nephew.<sup>8</sup> These and a number of similar facts,<sup>9</sup> which may be obtained on an industrious study of the letters and memoirs of the time, can leave little doubt that, though a state of war existed, and though to some extent it put a stop to the social intercourse,<sup>10</sup> yet it made little real difference to the friendship that existed between the upper classes.

<sup>1</sup> Jesse, Vol. III. p. 387. This was obviously later than July 1779.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole, Vol. X. p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XI. p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XII. p. 393.

<sup>5</sup> Maugras, Vol. II. p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Walpole.

<sup>7</sup> A. Young, Vol. I. p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Jesse, Vol. III. p. 367.

<sup>9</sup> *e. g.* the reception of Miss Mary Robinson in Paris, the entertainment of M. de Grasse in England. See also *infra* on Spa.

<sup>10</sup> Miss Mary Berry, p. 342.

No sooner was peace signed than the French "invasion" recommenced: French *amour-propre* was satisfied: "America had been butchered by Spain, oppressed by England and saved by France." England, on the other hand, had shown herself no mean antagonist. "The desire to see this wonderful isle redoubled." From 1784-1789 the French "came in crowds to England, where they are better received than ever among the noblesse: the houses are open to them among the other classes; the people have no longer their old prejudices against a Frenchman."<sup>1</sup> The Ducs de Chartres, de Fitzjames, de Polignac and M. de Coigny led the way: <sup>2</sup> the gay courtiers of Marie Antoinette's Court were readily welcomed at Carlton House; <sup>3</sup> Orleans and Fitzjames are as much at home at Brooks's as Hare, Fitzpatrick or Fox.<sup>4</sup> Mme. de Genlis visits Oxford, escorted by Burke; <sup>5</sup> Mirabeau stays at Bowood with Shelburne; <sup>6</sup> each French visitor has a circle of friends who delight in rendering his stay enjoyable. In 1786 Storer writes that all assemblies were filled with French visitors, who took possession of every available house in town. The arrival of a lady so eminent as the Duchess of Polignac and the rest of the Court favourites, excited great interest in fashionable circles in 1787. A letter of Storer's to Eden <sup>7</sup> will show the terms on which French Society stood. "On Monday they went to see Mrs. Siddons and then slept at Lord Beauchamp's. On Tuesday they went to the opera, Mme. de Polignac in the Duchess of Devonshire's box, Mme. de Vaudreuil in Lady Sefton's, Mme. de Guiche in Lady Pembroke's, Mlle. la Comtesse (Diane) in somebody's box that I do not know, and afterwards to a ball and supper at the Duchess of

<sup>1</sup> Dutens, *L'Ami des Étrangers*.

<sup>2</sup> A complete list of the advance guard is given in the *Annual Register*, May 18, 1783: The Duc de Coigny, Duc de Polignac, Marquis de Coigny, Comte de Danlon, Comte Straizes, Marquise de Coigny, Comtesse de Chalons, Comtesse d'Anloie.

<sup>3</sup> Ségur, *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. I. p. 369.

<sup>5</sup> Genlis, *Memoirs*, pp. 285-287.

<sup>6</sup> Fitzmaurice, Vol. III. p. 442.

<sup>7</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, April 26, 1787.

Devonshire's. On Wednesday they dined at the Duke of Manchester's. To-morrow they go to Bath. On Wednesday morning they breakfasted at Carlton House."

In 1788 the story is the same: "We have a colony of Frenchmen here coming to improve themselves and to acquire new ideas of liberty."<sup>1</sup> Storer's jesting remark was really truer, perhaps, than he meant. During the years 1783-1789 many of the vagrants of the French literary world came over either to take refuge from the just punishment of their libellous works, or with the avowed purpose of disseminating political tracts from a vantage ground of safety, and of studying the working of constitutional forms. Thévenot de Morande had long been in asylum here, only to return when the outbreak of the Revolution gave free play to his scandalous pen. Chavannes settled in London for a time; Linguet, exiled after his imprisonment in 1782, made London his headquarters while writing the *Memoirs of the Bastille*.<sup>2</sup> Brissot's *Memoirs* give us an insight into the life in London of these later literary types. He himself confesses that his object in seeking a home in England in 1783-1784 was the double one of studying liberal institutions and of scattering in France revolutionary treatises. Here he mixed with all the advanced thinkers of the country—with Jeremy Bentham, with David Williams, with Mrs. Macaulay the Republican historian, and with Priestley.<sup>3</sup> Most conclusive of the new relations which the association had inaugurated is, perhaps, the establishment of *hôtels garnis*; for the demand has created the supply, and in 1789 "a stranger is no longer as embarrassed in London as he was twenty-five years ago."<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, the numbers of English people visiting France seem to have been equally remarkable; the cessation of Walpole's correspondence with Mme. du Deffand deprives us, however, of an unfailing source of information

<sup>1</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Storer to Eden, May 2, 1788.

<sup>2</sup> *Nouvelle Biographie Generale*, Art. "Linguet."

<sup>3</sup> Brissot, *Mémoires*, Vol. II., most of which deals with his sojourn in London.

<sup>4</sup> Dutens, *L'Ami des Étrangers*, Preface.

of their names and doings. In 1783 the English in Paris "are very numerous."<sup>1</sup> Hailes, in a dispatch to Lord Carmarthen, mentioned the great numbers of English families either resident or travelling in France, and adds that he has good reason to believe that there is scarcely a town where one or more are not settled.<sup>2</sup> In 1786 Dorset writes, "We have plenty of English here,"<sup>3</sup> and among them were the Engineers Boulton and Watt, who had come on a commercial enterprise. In 1787 there were over sixty English families settled at Nice, and in 1788 there were said to be over 40,000 of our countrymen in France and Lorraine.<sup>4</sup> In 1789 many regency caps and hats were to be seen in Paris, but numbers of the visitors had returned home on the news of the King's illness.<sup>5</sup> Lady Craven, in her *Memoirs*, tells us that it was rumoured that the Queen allowed Mme. de Polignac a sum of money for the entertainment of foreigners, of whose society she was fond. This may or may not be true—Lady Craven does not seem a very reliable authority—but certainly all the visitors of good social position were warmly welcomed by the Duchess's society.<sup>6</sup> Romilly went in 1781, when he saw Diderot and D'Alembert, in 1783, and again in 1788, when he made acquaintance with men like La Rochefoucauld, La Fayette, Malesherbes and other liberal-minded Frenchmen; he also went again in 1789.<sup>7</sup> Anthony Pasquin, who went in 1787, may have been a congenial, but hardly a desirable visitor. Storer, in the course of his stay in 1786, visited the Baron de Besenval;<sup>8</sup> on the King's recovery in 1789 Queensberry retired to Paris to avoid the jeers of those who called him "rat"; Pitt was the object of universal curiosity in 1783; the bigamous Duchess of Kingston withdrew there after her

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Hare, *Castle Howard MSS.*, p. 639.

<sup>2</sup> Hailes to Carmarthen, August 11, 1785.

<sup>3</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Nov. 23, 1786 (I. 397).

<sup>4</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIV. p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Huber to Eden, March 18, 1789, and Dorset to Eden, Nov. 29, 1788.

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach*, p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 97, where a fuller list is given.

<sup>8</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Storer to Eden, Dec. 7, 1786.

trial and made her house a fashionable resort.<sup>1</sup> The attitude of the French towards travellers seems to have been courteous in the extreme. Arthur Young desired to see the funeral of the Prince de Tingry. He was at first refused permission, but was afterwards recalled and politely desired to enter, as it was not realised at first that he was an Englishman.<sup>2</sup> During the years that followed the outbreak of the Revolution, many Englishmen continued their visits to Paris, partly from curiosity, partly from habit; during the year 1789 the sittings of the National Assembly provoked much interest, and many, like Romilly, were frequently consulted by one or other of the cabals formed by its members. As Paris became more and more a scene of riots, English Society was nervous of making its tour through France, and none but adventurous or curious spirits trusted themselves within the walls of the French capital.

Thus it is evident that the visits of English men and women to Paris, and those of the French nobility to England, must have ensured the existence of a greater knowledge of the blessings of representative government than had been the case in 1763. No sketch of the opportunities for mutual intercourse would, however, be complete without some mention of Spa, "the most agreeable resort of the best company of Europe."<sup>3</sup> The great expense of staying there necessitated that the company should be select, and thus it frequently happened that the nobility of both countries were staying there together. "That place," writes Williams to Selwyn in 1763, "must be a veritable colony of English; parties are making from Privy Councillors down to tavern waiters. Lord and Lady Bateman set out to-morrow; Jack Sebright the next day; Lord and Lady Spencer the day following, and I think I heard the Nailors intended to open a Pharaoh Bank in the Bishopric of Liège;" while the Earl of Carlisle writes in 1768, "You would like this place

<sup>1</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch, *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> Young's *Travels in France*, Vol. I. p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Dutens, *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 55. (Compare Ségur, "Spa was the Coffee House of Europe.")

(Spa), for you would have constant opportunities of talking French.”<sup>1</sup> The Prince de Ligne describes it : “ The most ridiculous names, titles, and faces, hypochondriacal mylords walking to and fro, Paris hussies who come with shouts of laughter, young men of every race believing and making themselves English, talking between their teeth and dressed like grooms; French Bishops with their nieces, a doctor wearing the Order of St. Michael,” etc.,<sup>2</sup> a veritable phantasmagoria of all the nations of Europe. Dutens, with the Duke of Northumberland, meets Mme. du Boufflers there;<sup>3</sup> the Duchess of Devonshire, the Earl of Mornington, Lady Mary Coke, Sir Charles and Lady Bunbury are among its English visitors; Lord Shelburne goes there after his fall in 1783; it is, in fact, a rendezvous where the fashionable classes may indulge in their favourite folly of gambling and renew the friendships formed at Paris or London.<sup>4</sup> Besides Spa one may cite Brighton, then rising into popularity, and Bath, as places only second to the queen of watering-places. Of the former Williams writes (1764): “ We are very much obliged to France for sending us twice a week some very extraordinary exotics. Barbers, milliners, barons, counts, arrive here almost every tide,”<sup>5</sup> while the latter was the scene of the young Vicomte du Barry’s tragic death. In 1789 Francis writes from Bath: “ Our friend Barham gave a very handsome entertainment to all the French, who are not a few, in this city. Calonne, the Duc de Luxembourg, Fox and I played at whist.”<sup>6</sup> It is also a point worthy of notice that in many of the French provincial towns colonies of English residents existed. Arthur Young mentions some: Boulogne, Montreuil, Béziers. Thicknesse met

<sup>1</sup> Jesse, *Selwyn*, August 28, 1768.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wormely, Vol. I. p. 230. Mrs. Greville, writing to Lady Sarah Lennox, says, “ If you could but hear the noise we make with our different languages you might, I should think, have a pretty good idea of the building of Babel.”

<sup>3</sup> Dutens, *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Mary Coke gives a vivid account of Spa in her *Journal*, Vol. II. pp. 60-72. The list of Englishmen she found there is long enough to prove the popularity of Spa.

<sup>5</sup> Jesse, *Selwyn*.

<sup>6</sup> Burke’s *Letters*, Jan. 2, 1789, Francis to Burke.

English residents at Avignon. When Lord Lewisham visited France, in the course of his tour, he described Orleans as "infested" with English and Blois as "swarming" with them.<sup>1</sup> At Rheims lived a lady and gentleman whose partiality to the English nation was so great that their neighbours called their house the "English hotel."<sup>2</sup> Sterne's widow retired to Angoulême.<sup>3</sup> Thus it would appear that travellers to France covered the face of the country, visiting the great mansions, and disseminating as they went ideas of liberty and independence.

<sup>1</sup> *Dartmouth MSS.*, Vol. III. p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> *Thicknesse*, Vol. I. p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Wilkes' Correspondence*.

## CHAPTER II

### A CONTRAST OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH SOCIETY

#### § 1. *French Society in 1763*

IN the eyes of the French Society of the early part of the century, England was in a state of barbarism, lacking in taste, and wanting in polish. The two events in English history with which it was best acquainted—the execution of Charles I and the expulsion of James II—did not tend to eradicate this conception. The enthusiasm of Montesquieu for the English constitution, Voltaire's *Letters* on the English, and the growing taste of our leisured classes for Continental travel, had more or less dispelled the idea, but it vanished slowly. The French who visited Walpole's Gothic enormity at Strawberry Hill regarded it as "natural enough in a nation which had not yet arrived at true taste."<sup>1</sup> Stories<sup>2</sup> are told which would suggest that the less worldly members of French Society still retained a somewhat crude conception of English civilisation. Grosley, whose *Tour to London* was published in 1771, wrote, "I expected to find at London a people as sanguinary as ready to engage in quarrels; a people whose love of carnage equalled their pride and insolence; a people amongst whom tranquillity and security could not be established. . . . I was mistaken."<sup>3</sup> A writer in *The London Chronicle* of 1766 ascribed the French civility and complaisance to their vanity—the desire to

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. VIII. p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> An elderly French lady inquired of a writer in *The London Chronicle*, No. 2016, if there were tables and chairs in England. One is reminded of a story of Walpole about the Intendant of Rouen who asked if there were roads of communication in England. "I suppose he thinks," adds Walpole, "that in general we inhabit trackless forests and wild mountains, and that once a year a few legislators come to Paris to learn the arts of civil life" (*Letters*, Vol. VII. p. 312).

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I. p. 48.

impress the neighbouring barbarians with their superior politeness. Certainly the life of the *salons* was one which necessarily inculcated the virtues of courtesy and obedience to rigid etiquette, while the gay and natural conversation on trivial and literary subjects that enlivened the supper-tables of Parisian hostesses induced an ease of manner that was unknown elsewhere. The existence of this polished Society in Paris must apparently be ascribed to three chief causes, each of which played its part in perfecting the art of social life: the natural genius of the French nation, the attraction of the highest classes to Paris, and the absence of any serious interests. Certainly the French possessed a spirit of sociability very different from the moody taciturnity with which they reproached our countrymen. Madame de Boufflers was an ardent admirer of England, yet she could have consented to live there only on condition that she took with her twenty-four or twenty-five of her intimate friends.<sup>1</sup> "O French, you are very light and very silly," exclaimed Baron d'Holbach, himself the most delightful of Parisian hosts, "but you are worth a hundred times more than these *maussades* and gloomy thinkers."<sup>2</sup> Lord Holderness, who was well acquainted with both French and English Society, writes to Hume, "I suppose there is something in our *natural* as well as our political constitution which renders the ease of life, so universal in France, difficult, if not impossible here."<sup>3</sup> This innate sociability of the French found its outlet in the hospitality of the *salon*, where the reigning sovereigns of fashion kept open house for their friends. The Court itself is a great permanent *salon*; Madame de Luxembourg, reformed coquette though she was, welcomed all who were fortunate enough to receive her approbation; the Sundays

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* of Mlle. de l'Espinasse, Vol. XLI.

<sup>2</sup> Diderot to Mlle. Voland, Sept. 20, 1765. Holbach had just returned from England "disgusted with the amusements, which wore the air of religious ceremonies, with the men, on whose countenance you never see confidence, gaiety, friendship or sociability, but on every face the inscription 'What is there between you and me?'"

<sup>3</sup> *Letters to Hume*, p. 72. Wraxall expresses the same views, and Dutens (*Memoirs of a Traveller*) refers to the comparative failure of English imitations of the *salon*.

of Mme. du Deffand brought together the English aristocracy and the *titré, mitré* and *littéré* of all Paris; those who sought the society of the philosophers eagerly seized the opportunity of visiting Mme. Geoffrin on those Wednesdays when the encyclopædists gathered at her table; the admirers of Rousseau paid court to Mme. d'Epinay, those of d'Alembert and Diderot to Mlle. de l'Espinasse; Holbach, Mme. Helvetius, Mme. Necker, Mme. du Bocage and a host of minor imitators established *salons* in which the "pleasures of the table were improved by lively and liberal conversation."<sup>1</sup> Lord March dines night after night: one with the Prince de Soubise, another with Mme. de Choiseul, a third with the Duc de Chartres. Lord Carlisle sups one day at Mme. Aiguillon's, another at Mme. du Deffand's, and then has a posse of people to dine with him. And so it is with all; the evening's<sup>2</sup> entertainment is the main business of the day, and the presence of women, who joined easily in the conversation, added to the piquancy and enjoyment in a way that astonished the English visitors.

And if the conversation was light, what of their occupations? What English Minister, when his power was trembling in the balance, could amuse himself with a doll?<sup>3</sup> "While the Englishman is earning disease and misery at his bottle, the Frenchman is embroidering his gown or knitting a handkerchief for his mistress,<sup>4</sup> and the ladies are amusing themselves by unravelling the sword-knots of their gentlemen acquaintance."<sup>5</sup> No danger prevents the inhabitants of Paris from circulating pasquinades.<sup>6</sup> Almost all make rhymes and are Society actors; many are musicians and

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, *Autobiography*. For the popularity of the *salon* compare Brissot (*Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 207). "Wives of Academicians, and of Procureurs-General, of Bourgeois and Grand Seigneurs, of Contrôleur des finances, and simple financier," all wanted to have a bureau (*d'esprit*) to preside over.

<sup>2</sup> This is hardly strictly true. At Holbach's, where the conversation was most restrained, the guests arrived about two and did not leave till seven or eight, afterwards going to the opera or the théâtre.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* of Mme. du Deffand.

<sup>4</sup> Thicknesse, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> Genlis, Vol. III. p. 141. Compare Wilkes, *Corr.*, Vol. IV. p. 297.

<sup>6</sup> Moore, Letter XI.

painters of dead nature. Now Monsieur de Choiseul was making tapestry; others were embroidering or making knots.<sup>1</sup> "Before the satisfaction of the minute they are like a child before fruit, and nothing stops them—neither danger, since they forget it, nor the *convenances*, since they make them."<sup>2</sup> Though they meet daily at one another's houses, their sole care is to banish the ennui which results from an idle life of selfish gratification. Mme. du Deffand's acute intellect could see through the hollow pretence. "Ici nous jugeons ordinairement sur l'écorce"; or "Ici on se moque de tout, et l'on n'y pense pas l'instant d'après;" or "Hommes et femmes ne paroissent des machines à ressorts qui alloient, venoient, parloient, rioient sans penser, sans réfléchir, sans sentir," represent the reasoned reflections of the Marquise on the highest nobility of Paris. The complete absence of any ambition, the rigid social scale, and the impossibility of taking part in the business of the State or the commerce of the country, took from them those resources and that interest which is found in the English Society of that period, and explains the shallow round of their daily lives. As the great are, so are the *tiers état*<sup>3</sup>—an easy-going, joyous, happy-natured people. "To be always gay is the characteristic of the Frenchman;"<sup>4</sup> "naturally gay," says Besenval, "he does not display his agitation by those coarse and savage features that are noticeable among other peoples,"<sup>5</sup> but rather, as Moore tells us, by dancing on the boulevards.<sup>6</sup> The bright attire of the fashionable world was the index of this joyous nature within; in 1763, Paris was the arbiter of fashion to the whole of Europe.

"Nos dames doivent leurs attraits  
A tous leurs grands plumets,"<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taine, Book II. chap. ii. par. 5. The whole of this section emphasises the point.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II. chap. ii. par. 6, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> This must be understood of the aspect they wore in the eyes of strangers or moralists. There were, of course, many excellent and highly respectable people among the *tiers état*.

<sup>4</sup> Andrews, quoted by Taine, Book II. chap. ii. par. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Besenval, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> Letter XI.

<sup>7</sup> *Letters* of Mme. du Deffand to Horace Walpole.

ran a popular song, and the silks and satins, the elaborate head-dresses and the waving feathers of the ladies, and the gilt sword-knots and gay uniforms of the gentlemen, added to the brilliance of the social gatherings of Paris and the splendour of its Court. Fashion held great sway there—not only fashion in dress, but in other respects as well. It is essential, I think, to the realisation of the mechanism by which the English influence affected France, to understand this Empire of *la mode*. In Moser's Moral and Political Map of Europe,<sup>1</sup> France is described as the country of “*citoyens* and mode,” an assertion undeniably confirmed by the anecdotes that have been recorded. Walpole perpetrated an ungenerous skit on Rousseau, and that *passe-partout* called fashion made the doors of Society fly open “till he has been sent for about like an African Prince or a learned canary bird.”<sup>2</sup> Mock orders become popular; and every one rushes to be enrolled.<sup>3</sup> After the American War everything English became the fashion: our opinions, our fashions and our games were adopted in France;<sup>4</sup> the French youth “anglicised” themselves, and thus a passing whim affects the national character.

In one respect Paris was vastly different from London: here Society congregated during the session only, but in the former all that was most distinguished, either by birth or by talents, permanently resided. When a French nobleman was disgraced by the King, he was “exiled” to the country. “Banishment alone,” wrote Young, “will force the French to execute what the English do from pleasure—reside upon or adorn their estates,” a remark that was written even after association with our countrymen had done much to effect an alteration.<sup>5</sup> The results of this were considerable:

<sup>1</sup> *London Chronicle*, No. 1881. Compare Andrews, p. 79: “No nation more tamely submitting to the guidance of the mode in every respect than the French.”

<sup>2</sup> Walpole to Gray, Jan. 25, 1766.

<sup>3</sup> Mme. de Genlis founded that of Perseverance: Mme. de la Ferté-Imbault that of Lanturelus. The Duc de Bouillon created an order of Felicity, and an old order of Constancy was revived in 1770. (See Taine, p. 211; Maugras, pp. 2, 109, *seq.*; Aldis, etc.)

<sup>4</sup> Gibbon, *Autobiography*.

<sup>5</sup> Young, *Tour in France*, Vol. I. pp. 45 and 57.

what the rural districts lost in enlightenment, the Court gained in splendour; the *grande noblesse* lost the utility of feudal magnates, while still preserving their feudal dues; the presence in Paris of the mass of the nobility rendered them peculiarly susceptible, as a body, to external influences and the vagaries of fashion, while at the same time leaving them ignorant of the aspirations and distresses of those outside their own clique. Men of letters were attracted to Paris, where lay all their hopes of patronage and advancement; they lived in close communion with the aristocratic circles of the capital, and thus their ideas affected Society to an extent that was impossible in England, where the literary classes were segregated from the nobility.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Paris assumed an overwhelming position among French towns. "We are a provincial town; we must wait to see what is done at Paris," was the answer of Nancy to Arthur Young's question as to what would be the result there,<sup>2</sup> and the ideas prevalent in the capital received unquestioning acceptance in the provinces. This feature of French life is of the greatest importance. Whatever influence the imitation of England may have possessed in promoting the revolutionary spirit unquestionably gains in effect when we reflect that it was necessary for it to be exercised only at Paris, the unique brilliance of which city was the magnet that attracted the English. The germs of disease rapidly multiply where masses of men are collected, and infect the whole, till the art of the doctor cannot stamp out the epidemic; the ideas of the century, and the passion for liberty and equality, are but the germs of a diseased discontent which the English visitors scattered in Paris, and which spread therefrom with a virulence that nothing but extermination of the social order could stay. French Society, too, was peculiarly stereotyped; the various grades of the

<sup>1</sup> Compare Ségur, "The most distinguished men of letters were received in a flattering manner by the higher nobility" (*Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 55); also Garat, "Men of letters went into the great world because they could do so without being rich" (Vol. I. p. 283); and Hume, "A man that distinguishes himself in letters meets immediately with regard and attention."

<sup>2</sup> *Tour in France*, Vol. I. p. 137.

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social scale were sharply defined, and the line of demarcation could not be overstepped. In the hands of the *grande noblesse* were the great offices of State and the higher ranks of the Church and Army. The very strictness of their isolation rendered them willing to condescend, for they never feared that the *roturier* or the bourgeois could aspire to their privileges or their rank. To dabble with ideas of equality, even to conceive of themselves playing in a House of Lords the part of English Peers, seemed eminently safe, since they had no notion that equality was possible. The ornaments of the Court, polished, refined, and often literary, they welcomed men of letters to their table. "You will dine," wrote Marmontel to Garrick, "with all that are most polished among the French nobility."<sup>1</sup> Inheritors of the feudal tradition, fired by noble sentiments, yet corrupted by evil morals, they constitute at once the most amiable, the most frivolous, the most impecunious and the most discontented class in the social scale. Beneath them comes the mass of the inferior *noblesse*, the lawyers, the financiers, and the provincial intendants and place-holders, valuing their privileges of exemption, but actually performing some of their proper functions in the State. Moore regards the lawyers as the most enlightened class in the community, possessed of just and manly sentiments of government.<sup>2</sup> It is this class that I believe to have been more influenced by the English visitors than any other. While the *grande noblesse* gaily adopted our costume, and talked glibly about liberty and equality, the ideas which the lawyers and financiers gleaned from the numbers of English Members of Parliament and English squires and country gentlemen who sought their company sank deep into their minds. They are not recorded by name in the letters and journals of the *beau monde*, but many of them visited England, and

<sup>1</sup> *Garrick Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Letters VII. and XXI. Compare Dutens, "The fashionable world at Paris is divided into two classes, the first of which is formed of the nobility, the second is composed of farmers-general and lawyers" (*Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 61).

extracted from their visit more real instruction than the upper classes, between them and whom "Ancient usage," says Ségur, "had placed an immense interval, which was not to be got over but by talents of the highest order."<sup>1</sup> This exclusiveness they imitated, and an equal interval separated them from the merchant and bourgeois, even though many of these latter were possessed of greater wealth than the penniless nobility, who subsisted only on the bounty of the King. Moore heard an Englishman explaining to a circle of bourgeois the advantages of the English constitution.<sup>2</sup> We can but conceive the sentiments with which men excluded from any possibility of promotion would realise the ease with which the merchant class in England could rise to power and influence; it is illustrative of the French mind at the time, that the only effect Moore observed was that they felt for the great, and sympathised with their want of importance. It was precisely this attitude of mind that rendered French Society so extremely fertile in propagating ideas, fashions, morals. Each layer of the soil is a copy of the one above, till even the valets can without improbability pose as their masters. Throughout all this Society there is the same social instinct, the same observance of *les convenances*, the same atheism and the same looseness of morals.

And it is immoral, not with the coarseness of England, it is true, but still openly and flagrantly immoral. Husband and wife as a rule live in complete separation: "We shall lodge in the same house, like fashionable French husband and lady," writes the Earl Marishal to Hume, "without seeing other."<sup>3</sup> The literary world is tainted with the subtle poison of sensuality; the fashionable world reckons it dishonourable to a woman only if she have several lovers at the same time.<sup>4</sup> The great mass of the nation is degraded.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ségur, *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Letter VII.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters to Hume*, p. 72. The Duc de Lauzun did not see his wife for ten years though there was no disagreement.

<sup>4</sup> Barrière, pp. 207-217.

<sup>5</sup> See Thicknesse, Letter XV., the whole of which illustrates the point.

Yet with it all there is a delicate flavour about their passions, an exquisite politeness and sense of decency that gives to French Society a tone peculiar to itself,<sup>1</sup> and is due probably to the supreme position of women.<sup>2</sup> Let them lose this position, let the restraints of good breeding insensibly diminish, let the elegant knot-making and weaving of tapestry be replaced by the gaming-table, the race-course and the betting-book, and we have the materials of perhaps the most degraded Society the modern world has seen. There was a man moving in the highest circles, and the intimate of Marie Antoinette, who, shrewder than his fellows, saw all this. The Prince de Ligne writes in 1787 (as he himself afterwards remarks) these prophetic words: "If races, newspapers, English clubs, frock-coats, boots, little cords in their leather breeches, theatres and dreadful dramas cause them to lose their natural graces, if they cease to be singing, dancing and gallivanting, the *French will become furious madmen!*"<sup>3</sup>

## § 2. *English Society as it presented itself to the French*<sup>4</sup>

What had French Society to learn from the upper classes in England at this time? The sarcastic pen of Walpole has painted the picture of English life in 1763: "The beginning of October one is certain that every one will be at Newmarket, and the Duke of Cumberland will lose and Shafto win two or three thousand pounds. . . . The Parliament opens and

<sup>1</sup> Brissot refers to that  *finesse d'esprit*  that Crebillon the younger had put *à la mode* in Paris (Vol. II.).

<sup>2</sup> Compare Mme. Vigée Le Brun, quoted by Taine, "Women reigned then, but the Revolution dethroned them." A. Young noted the rapid decline of the influence of women in 1789.

<sup>3</sup> Prince de Ligne, *Mémoires*, ed. Wormeley, Vol. I. p. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the minor characteristics particularly commented on by foreigners have been omitted from this section, but are referred to in the other chapters, *e.g.* the habit of inoculation for small-pox, the reputation of the English as suicides and duellists, the tendency of English women to nurse their own children, and the barbarity of the English mob. See Voltaire, *Lettres Philosophiques*, No. XI., and the preliminary letter; Coyer, Letter XXXII.; Prince de Ligne, *Fragments relatifs aux Mémoires* (London); Grosley, Vol. I. p. 250; *ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 84, and *Annual Register*, 1763 (Appendix on Condamine).

everybody is bribed ; and the new Establishment is perceived to be composed of adamant. November passes with two or three self-murders and a new play. Christmas arrives ; everybody goes out of town and a riot happens in one of the theatres. The Opposition languishes ; balls and assemblies begin. . . . An unexpected debate starts up at the end of the session that makes more noise than anything that was designed to make a noise. . . . Ranelagh opens and Vauxhall ; one produces a scandal, t'other a drunken quarrel. People separate, some to Tunbridge and some to all the horse races in England." <sup>1</sup> This picture is a perfect summary of all that impressed the French visitors to England, as we find it in the books in which Grosley, Coyer, and their fellows describe the English they had visited.

There was much in the life of an English nobleman to excite the envy of the aristocracy of France ; there was not, it is true, the wealth of privilege that attached to the rank of the French nobility, but, on the other hand, there was a far wider interest in life, a privilege they desired more than all the feudal rights they owned. Grace Elliott had often heard Orleans declare " that he would willingly change his lot and all his fortune for a small estate in England and the privileges of that delightful country." <sup>2</sup> For every English country gentleman took a deep interest in political affairs, and every English nobleman aspired to serve his country when his party was in office. For fifty years the executive power had resided in the hands of the great Whig families, and as each fresh scion of these houses reached the age of manhood he flung himself into politics, so that it was frequently not easy to find a leader for the Lower House. Though George III had attempted to break the power of the Whigs, his frequent changes of government, while offering more chances of Cabinet rank to young aspirants for office, excited at the same time a keener

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, V. p. 418, 1763.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of My Life during the Revolution*, p. 100.

interest in political affairs. It is, indeed, remarkable how much public affairs engrossed the men, and even the women, of this time. Newspapers had little circulation except in town, and the private letters of everybody, of wits like Selwyn, of roués like March, of ladies of fashion like Lady Mary Hervey or Lady Sarah Lennox, or of dilettanti like Walpole, even to their nearest and dearest relations, hardly ever conclude without some reference to the ever-changing political barometer. Among the lower classes things are just the same. "Amongst men of learning, artizans and clergymen," writes Grosley, "public affairs generally furnish the subject of conversation. Every Englishman gives as much attention to these matters as if he were Prime Minister."<sup>1</sup> Arthur Young was surprised at the silence of French merchants and officers on subjects which in England would have been "analysed and debated by the carpenters and blacksmiths."<sup>2</sup> Yet it was certain that this—perhaps the most notable feature of English life in a Frenchman's eyes—would be one of the first to be imitated by the Anglomanes, as, indeed, there is ample evidence it was.

The spirit of discussion of politics led naturally to the formation of clubs, which flourished to an amazing extent. The main features of the London clubs are so well known as to need no discussion, but it is interesting for our present purpose to note the astonishment which they created in the eyes of Frenchmen accustomed to the *bureaux d'esprit* of Paris. Dutens in 1789 gives a section of *L'Ami des Étrangers* to them. "Every one knows," he says, "that they are assemblies of *men*."<sup>3</sup> Grosley, like Dutens, remarks that "even the lowest class have their club," which often was held in a private room at an inn or café. "Women," he continues, "could never gain admittance into these clubs, but they compensate by private coteries of their own, at which we are told they also talk politics."<sup>4</sup> The separation of the sexes which this feature of English

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Ami des Étrangers*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I. p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. I. p. 150.

life effected was probably to a great extent responsible for the coarse characteristics of English Society, and for that roughness of speech and proud reserve which disgusted d'Holbach, and was generously attributed by Voltaire to the east wind. A further consequence of the fascination of club life was that the assemblies, whether at Vauxhall and Ranelagh or at private houses, were comparatively dull affairs. The spectacle was brilliant enough, no doubt; Moritz has described how, from the upper galleries of Ranelagh, he looked down on the immense concourse of people moving round and round in the fairy circle; and Angelo describes the *coup d'œil* on entering the Rotunda as magnificent.<sup>1</sup> But the sociability to which the French were accustomed was noticeably absent. D'Holbach complained that the amusements wore the air of religious ceremonies, and compared the procession of "a hundred stiff and silent women around the orchestra" to the seven processions of the Egyptians round the tomb of Osiris.<sup>2</sup> Even the much more kindly disposed Dumont complains that "they walk round incessantly, stopping at the 'cabinets' to ask for refreshment."<sup>3</sup> At the private assemblies things seem to have been even less sociable: "The only thing that unites both sexes," writes Grosley, "is play. If they meet only to chat and converse, the women, generally speaking, place themselves near the door, and leave the upper end and the conversation to the men."<sup>4</sup> The American Gouverneur Morris complained that the arrangement of the company was "stiff and formal. There must be," he adds, "in this, as in other countries, ways of bringing people together, but at first sight it appears rather difficult," for "the ladies are all arranged in battalions on the opposite side of the room."<sup>5</sup> At those assemblies where play was the amusement of the evening "there are gaming-tables spread in

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*, Vol. II. p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Diderot, *Lettres à Mlle. Voland*, Oct. 6, 1765.

<sup>3</sup> *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, p. 303.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. I. p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> *Diary and Letters*, Vol. I. pp. 148-150.

the various rooms; and that lasts till one or two in the morning.”<sup>1</sup> Gambling and betting were, in fact, the two most conspicuous vices of English Society. The young men of the age think nothing of losing £5,000 to £15,000 in an evening at Almack’s,<sup>2</sup> and French visitors notice and acquire the fatal habit. “Luxury is excessive in gaming and betting,” writes Coyer.<sup>3</sup> “The Englishman is a gambler: he plays for frightful sums. He plays without speaking, he loses without lamenting, he uses in one moment all the resources of life,”<sup>4</sup> represents the impression left on most Frenchmen after a visit to Almack’s or White’s. Jefferson warns a young American that if he goes to England “he learns drinking, horse-racing and betting,”<sup>5</sup> and as a description of English Society in the eighteenth century it is only too true. In other respects their morals were hardly more respectable, and the licentiousness—“the torrent of licentiousness that prevails amongst us,” as Mrs. Chapone calls it<sup>6</sup>—was as bad, and less refined than that at Paris. Probably at no time were there so many prominent men of both parties around whom disgraceful stories clung as when Sandwich, Wilkes and Grafton filled the public eye. The private life of Fox, or even of the Duke of Richmond, would not bear investigation. The marriage histories of the Duchesses of Kingston and Grafton, of Lady Bolingbroke and Lady Craven, lend point to Walpole’s remark that “a quarter of our peeresses will have been wives of half our living peers.” As for the ladies, “toilette, gallantry, play, balls and spectacles absorb all their time.”<sup>7</sup> Andrews, in his remarks on the French and English ladies, complains in 1783 that our women of fashion already betray too much

<sup>1</sup> Dutens, *L’Ami des Étrangers*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Ilchester lost £13,000 to Carlisle, Fox’s debts were estimated at £100,000, and the interest on those contracted by Lord Foley’s sons was put at £18,000 per annum. Instances could be multiplied.

<sup>3</sup> Coyer, p. 278.

<sup>4</sup> Diderot, *Lettres à Mlle. Voland*, loc. cit., supra.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, Vol. I. p. 346

<sup>6</sup> P. 147. Comp. Andrews, comp. View, “Libertinism is more prevalent in England than gallantry.”

<sup>7</sup> Coyer, p. 274.

proneness to imitate their neighbours, not only in their dresses and fashions, but in what is an object of far more serious consideration, the levity of their behaviour.”<sup>1</sup> When Walpole says, in 1782, “Gallantry in this country scorns a mask. Maids only intrigue, wives elope. *C’est l’étiquette*,” he is but expressing in his light and airy fashion the same sentiment that a more serious-minded member of Society expresses in 1780. Writing on May 12 Sir Gilbert Elliott remarks, “There is no woman who is not frightful that one can be sure of . . . and the laws of nature seem to predominate over those of Society.” The morals of English Society during this period perhaps reach a lower ebb than ever before or since, a curious fact in the light of the morality of the Court, and one which must be partly ascribed to the influence of France.

As the French visitors did not confine their stay to London, their attention was arrested by the comparative insignificance of the town houses of the nobility, which was in strong contrast with the magnificence and number of their country seats, and, on the other hand, with the vast *hôtels* of the aristocracy of Paris. Gibbon comments on it: “The splendour of the French nobles is confined to their town residence; that of the English is more usefully distributed in their country seats.”<sup>2</sup> Grosley notices it, and says, “Gentlemen of fortune, even some of the greatest distinction among them, are entirely busied in the cultivation of their lands and the several means of turning them to the best advantage,”<sup>3</sup> to which must be attributed the flourishing condition of agriculture during the century. Gonzalés, travelling in 1731, was of opinion that for its size England contained more stately seats than any other country of Europe,<sup>4</sup> and it is a curious testimony to the interest which was taken by the country gentlemen of Parliament in their landed property that the ministry of Chatham had to submit, despite the elaborate system of

<sup>1</sup> P. 260.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I. p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> Pinkerton, Vol. II. p. 151.

Parliamentary management, to a defeat on the question of the land-tax. Arthur Young tells us that seven or eight peers were correspondents to his *Annals of Agriculture*,<sup>1</sup> and the pleasure with which they seized the opportunities which the prorogation of Parliament offered for a relaxation from the cares of public life in the heart of the country was obvious to all the French who visited them at their seats.<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Bedford at Woburn, the Duke of Grafton at Euston, Lord Chatham at Hayes, Lord Shelburne at Bowood, General Conway at Park Place enjoyed that seclusion from public affairs that, in the eyes of the French, was "exile." "From eleven till three I was in the garden planting and transplanting," writes Lady Mary Coke in her *Diary*, and it was in consequence of the country life which the nobility led that English ladies "could out-walk and out-dance the French, over whom their dexterity and courage in horsemanship is obvious."<sup>3</sup>

That the English peers and country gentlemen could do so much more than the French for fostering agriculture and introducing the new experiments that flourished under the ægis of the various societies of agriculture which began to grow up was in great part due to their superior wealth. In France, where all the children of a nobleman were themselves noble and excluded by convention from replenishing the family coffers by means of trade and commerce, the wealth of the landed proprietors, except in the case of the absentee landlords who extracted funds from the royal exchequer, gradually passed from them into the hands of the merchant and bourgeois, and many a noble family lived in the country on the scantiest of means. On the other hand, in England the unbroken succession of the title and estates from eldest son to eldest son, while ensuring the continued financial prosperity of the family, at the same time enabled the younger members to provide in industry

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Mme. de Boufflers stayed at Woburn, Mirabeau and Morellet at Bowood, Malanet when a prisoner at Weymouth (1778) received attentions from the Duke of Dorset. Mrs. Damer escorted the Vicomte du Barry to Bath, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Andrews, *French and English Ladies*.

or commerce for their own descendants. This miscibility of the commons and the aristocracy was favourable to the growth of ideas of equality and the destruction of class distinctions. Voltaire, during his residence in England in 1727, observed with great admiration this feature of English life. "The younger son of a peer of the realm," he writes, "does not disdain commerce. Lord Townshend, a minister of the Crown, has a brother who is happy to be a merchant in the city. When Lord Orford governed England, his younger brother was a factor at Aleppo. In France," he continues, "whoso likes is a marquis; any one who arrives in Paris from the depths of the provinces with money to spend, and a name in 'ac' or in 'ille' may say, 'A man like me, a man of my rank,' and look down from an eminence on the merchant. The latter hears himself speak disdainfully of his profession so often that he is fool enough to blush at it."<sup>1</sup> Forty-five years later Grosley makes the same comment, instancing in his turn the cases of Thomas and Richard Walpole, the one a banker and the other a merchant, a case that, seeing the wide connections of Thomas Walpole's family in Paris, must have been well known to French Society.<sup>2</sup> In every phase of English life the same sense of equality was to be seen: in the country no arbitrary taxes, no complaints on the manner of assessment and collection, no exemptions;<sup>3</sup> the *noblesse* and the clergy are at the level of the people; on the high roads there is no dignity nor rank that exempts from turnpikes;<sup>4</sup> in the Church and Army the higher ranks are open to men of ability from the lower orders of Society; Macreth, the *ci-devant* Brooks's waiter, receives the order of knighthood; Pitt and Walpole can raise themselves to the highest position in the State by reason of capacity rather than birth; the Frenchmen who visited England found, in short, that neither by the laws of the State nor by the force of public opinion was any man restrained from following with some

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres Philosophiques*, No. X., sur le commerce.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I. p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Coyer, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

prospect of success the natural bent of his genius, and it is this aspect of English life that most forcibly impressed the cultured and educated citizens of France who joined in the excursions to England, and into whose hands the direction of the Revolution afterwards fell.<sup>1</sup> The external evidence of the equality that reigned everywhere was to them to be found in the "undress" attire that merchants and business men affected. "You are at home only for those who arrive on foot and in undress," wrote Coyer. "You dress only for dinner, and then all business ceases for the rest of the day."<sup>2</sup> Indifference to attire, in their view, spells freedom from the shackles of convention and tradition, and as such was regarded by them as the distinguishing mark of a nation that had taken the first step towards true liberty; English merchants transact their business in cafés that are dirty, ill-furnished and ill-lit, and it is quite simple that, reasoning by analogies, the Frenchman translates the *déshabillé commode* of a business man by *vêtement malpropre*.<sup>3</sup>

Yet with all this indifference to gaudy uniform, habits of extravagance are general in the fashionable world: "Sums unheard of before were laid out on houses and gardens and furniture. Prices unknown in other countries were given for objects of luxury."<sup>4</sup> "Our enormous luxury and expense astonishes the French," says Walpole. He took the Comte de Guines to see the new Winter Ranelagh in Oxford Street. "Ce n'est qu'à Londres qu'on peut faire cela!" exclaimed the Ambassador, as he gazed on the latest addition to London's amusements, erected at a cost of £60,000.<sup>5</sup> Three guineas was paid for admission to Mme. Cornely's fairy palace in Soho.<sup>6</sup> "It is incredible," writes Walpole, "what sums are raised by mere exhibitions of anything."<sup>7</sup> There

<sup>1</sup> "With a few illustrious exceptions, such as Mirabeau and La Fayette, the leaders of the Revolution in every period of its history, even during the Terror, came from this (bourgeois) class." Prof. F. C. Montague in *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, Vol. VIII. p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Letter II. Comp. Grosley, "Their favourite undress" (Vol. I. p. 154).

<sup>3</sup> Voltaire, *Lettre aux auteurs de la Gazette Littéraire*.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Berry, Vol. I. p. 341.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, Vol. VIII. p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VII. p. 379.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

is a rage for prints of English portraits, Etruscan vases made of earthenware in Staffordshire sell for 2-5 guineas; a tea-kettle in or-moulu for 130, though only 100 have been asked; half a guinea is paid for a nosegay. We are at the height of extravagance." In 1775 things are much the same: "We are given up to profusion, extravagance and pleasure; Cincinnatus will be found at the hazard-table and Camillus at a ball."<sup>1</sup> The luxuries brought—and too often smuggled—back from France are instructive reading on this point. St. John asks Selwyn to bring books, prints, watches, china; Lord March requires a commode, one of the fashionable *lits à la polonoise*, velvets, silks, perfumes, gloves; while Selwyn himself meditates having a barouche constructed there, and asks for tables, stone-buckles, a night-gown *à la Dauphine* and a box.<sup>2</sup> Paris was then famous for its furniture, and the luxurious extravagance of the English nabobs in purchasing the workmanship of Riesener and Gouthière incited the impoverished *noblesse* of Paris to a display of wealth they could not afford.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. IX. p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Culled from Jesse's *Life of Selwyn*.

<sup>3</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch tells of all Paris crowding to see a sideboard made for the Duke of Northumberland. *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 221.

## CHAPTER III

### THE REVOLUTION IN MANNERS

#### § I. *Dress and Daily Life*

DURING the last few years of the *ancien régime* a great revolution in fashionable attire took place: "They no longer put powder on the little boys; a number of *seigneurs* discard the stripes, the trimmings, the crimson coat, and the sword except in full dress; you meet them in the street dressed *à la Franklin* in coarse cloth with a knotty stick and thick shoes."<sup>1</sup> No doubt the personal influence of Franklin with a nation so enthusiastic as the French counted for much. His only *coiffure* was a fine fur cap. "Think," he writes, "how this must appear among the powdered heads of Paris. I wish every gentleman and lady would be so obliging as to follow my fashion and comb their own heads as I do mine."<sup>2</sup> Mme. du Deffand speaks of Franklin "with his fur cap on his head,"<sup>3</sup> and it must have been widely known, for a variety of clay medallions of him set in the lids of snuff-boxes, or worn in rings, were sold in France. But while much of the change in dress must be attributed to the popularity of the American Envoy, more perhaps is due to the effect produced on the French officers serving in America by the simple frugality and homeliness of attire of those whom they regarded as the apostles of liberty. La Fayette, in his *Memoirs*, tells us how impressed he was by those qualities of the Americans, and that while he was there his costume, his table, and his manners were

<sup>1</sup> Taine. *Comp. Mme. d'Oberkirch*, "A revolution took place this year (1784) in the dress of children. Children's hair is much neater, cut close, and unpowdered" (Vol. II. p. 197).

<sup>2</sup> *Letter to Mrs. Thompson*, p. 29 (1777). Franklin's influence would probably suffer if it is true, as Brissot says, that his children were dressed like *petits-mâîtres*.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters to Walpole*.

all American.<sup>1</sup> In a time when liberty and equality were words in every one's mouth, the fashion authorised the introduction of the modes of the two *nations affairées* where that liberty and that equality flourished best. We have seen how French travellers to England had noted the indifference of the English to full dress. Fox's negligence of attire was notorious, and in 1781 we read that "Fitzpatrick appeared at the play with very little powder in his hair."<sup>2</sup> Ségur had noted the tendency to adopt English fashions before the war; boots and coats after the English mode could alone satisfy the young bucks of Paris, who enjoyed the simplicity and freedom their adoption permitted.<sup>3</sup> After the war, the impulse given by the whole-hearted admiration of the Americans completed the conversion of the young men, and on Ségur's return in 1783 he found the English fashions more in vogue than ever.<sup>4</sup> The years 1786-1789 witnessed the culmination of this process. In 1784 Andrews, while noticing that "people of fashion are now met walking in an undress in the morning in the streets, who formerly would have thought it beneath their dignity," adds that the fashion has not obtained very much.<sup>5</sup> The *Magazin des Modes* for 1786 describes *habits couleur de suie de Londres* as the latest mode,<sup>6</sup> and explains that the English, who have always appeared in neglected attire, especially in Paris, have succeeded in dissipating the airs of toilet and adornment that circumscribed the French. The fashion is thought worthy of a Foreign Office dispatch. Hailes, who informs Carmarthen of this change, attributes it to the American influence, but admits it has brought the French nearer to the English than before.<sup>7</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch expressly associates the change with the English.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XII. p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Ségur, Vol. I. pp. 21 and 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Andrews, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> *Magazin des Modes*, 1786, Nos. 4 and 10. The plates there give some idea of the increasing popularity of "Robes franco-Anglomanes."

<sup>7</sup> Despite the contempt that the Duke of Dorset appears (*Auckland Corr.*) to have for Hailes, there seems much shrewdness in this dispatch, for he adds, "men of a speculative turn of mind do not fail to discern in it, though at a distance, the most important revolutions."

"A young gentleman," she writes, "who wished to be 'Englified' laid aside his sword. His friends imitated him, and in a short time it was the mode to appear swordless."<sup>1</sup> The authoress of the *Memoirs* of the Princesse de Lamballe, obsessed by the idea of a gigantic conspiracy—as others appear to have been—regarded the voyages of the principal nobility to England and the introduction of English modes merely as part of a scheme to overset the French monarchy.<sup>2</sup> Ségur sees more clearly: "Our imitation of their dress was not a triumph accorded to their taste, industry and superiority in the arts . . . it was the desire to naturalise among ourselves their institutions and their liberty;"<sup>3</sup> or, as Besenval has it, "under the externals of the English dress they forced themselves to display its spirit and its maxims."<sup>4</sup> Between 1786–1789 the men's clothes take a darker hue; while soft muslin, and a comparatively modest *coiffure* replace the velvets, the feathers and the *pouf à sentiment* of a decade earlier. In Society the *habit habillé* is almost banished, and men go even to great dinners in frock.<sup>5</sup> The Court followed, if it did not set, the fashion, and the Queen delighted to wear "white linen levettes" all day long, with a "chip or straw hat" with ribbons.<sup>6</sup> Arthur Young tells us that "the younger deputies came to dinner dressed *au polisson*, many of them without powder in their hair, and some in boots."<sup>7</sup> "At the beginning of 1789 it would have been impossible," says Taine, "to distinguish the *noblesse* and the *tiers état* in the streets: gentlemen . . . walked in a narrow-tailed coat, or drove in a cab."<sup>8</sup> By 1790 many of the *petits-mâîtres*, to show their attachment to the democracy, have sacrificed their curls, toupees and queues. Some of them go about with cropped locks like English farmers, and others wear little

<sup>1</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch, Vol. II. p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires de Lamballe*, Vol. I. p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II. p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Jefferson Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 224.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Sarah Lennox, Vol. II. p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> A. Young, 1789, p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 351.

<sup>8</sup> Taine, Book IV. chap. iii. Section 3.

black scratch wigs.<sup>1</sup> In the eyes of Dutens the Palais Royal and the Hôtel Bourbon were the sources from which every new and whimsical fashion sprung.<sup>2</sup> Now the Duc de Chartres, at any rate, was an ardent supporter of American liberty and a frequent visitor to England. Besenval says of him that women, Anglomania, and the pleasures of the table had made a strange compound of all the opposites,<sup>3</sup> and as early as 1769 he had shown his faith in English ways by the introduction thence of the habit of inoculation for smallpox.<sup>4</sup> When he arrived in England in 1783 it was observed that he appeared at a dinner of Lady Clermont's "dirty and in a frock with metal buttons enamelled in black."<sup>5</sup> Other importers of the fashions were Lauraguais, Lauzun, and Conflans, all of whom are among the earliest visitors to England.<sup>6</sup> In fact it was the nobility, and not the people, that first introduced that zeal for republican forms, not only in constitutions, but in other respects as well, that led eventually to the disappearance of all the superficial graces of the *ancien régime*. Furniture, wall decorations, *coiffures*, beds, everything that lent taste and beauty to the daily lives of the French passed through the same levelling, subduing process which the nobility in their enthusiasm for English forms had themselves inaugurated: the Government itself admitted that the introduction of English manufactures had become so extraordinary that unless French goods were advertised as English they had little chance of a sale,<sup>7</sup> and it was to some extent through the medium of these outward and visible signs that republican notions entered into, and filled the minds of the populace. The Government failed to see this; its outlook was biased

<sup>1</sup> Mornington to Grenville, *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. I. p. 608.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of a Traveller*, Vol. III. p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. III. p. 307.

<sup>4</sup> *Mémoires de Lamballe*, Vol. I. p. 133. The Baronne de Méré speaks of him as already attacked by Anglomania at this time.

<sup>5</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, XII. (end). Mme. d'Oberkirch says that large metal buttons bearing portraits of the twelve Cæsars, or of the French kings were popular in 1786.

<sup>6</sup> Ségur, Vol. I. p. 131. For Brissot's opinion of the revolutionary noble see *Autobiography*, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> *Arrêt* on introduction of muslins.

by the more pressing question of the effect on French manufacturing interests. "They did not remark," says Ségur, one of that little group of French nobles most conspicuous by their ardent love of liberty, "that the plain raiment betrayed a unanimous desire of equality, and that, being unable to shine like English lords and deputies in public assemblies, we were at least desirous of distinguishing ourselves by equal magnificence in our *cirques*, by the splendour of our parks, and by the swiftness of our horses."<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously with the simplification of attire English cabs were introduced into Paris, and in the last few years of the *ancien régime* were largely imported. Even as early as 1763 the Duc de Croÿ writes, "One day my daughter, my son and I, all three in an English carriage, made a trial of this pretty and singular vehicle, so light and handy."<sup>2</sup> And they must have been freely used before the American War, for Mme. du Deffand writes that no less than a thousand accidents had occurred from their use.<sup>3</sup> The change from the heavy and lumbering vehicles of Paris to these elegant phaetons proved attractive, and the young men soon began to spend the whole morning going about. "Horses and *cabriolets*," writes the Prince de Ligne, "will be the ruin of the young men of Paris. They dine with men; they sup with courtesans, because they are in frock-coats and it is too late to go into good company."<sup>4</sup> There are other writers who comment on the greater licentiousness of Parisian Society; loose expressions are used in the presence of the most respectable women; free and easy manners were adopted even in the best society.<sup>5</sup> With this loss of moral restraint is a loss of breeding, from which its power to moderate outbursts of temper seems to have departed. Ségur, returning from Russia in 1789, no longer found in the *salons* "that gentleness, that attic spirit, that urbanity of manners that so long distinguished them."<sup>6</sup> Jefferson

<sup>1</sup> Ségur, Vol. I. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of the Duc de Croÿ*, Vol. II. p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Mme. du Deffand* to H. Walpole, Jan. 21, 1778.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of Prince de Ligne*, ed. K. P. Wormely, Vol. I. p. 288.

<sup>5</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch, Vol. I. p. 322.

<sup>6</sup> Ségur, Vol. III. p. 489.

had never seen a Frenchman drunk; yet had he been present at the social meetings of the Prince of Wales with the Duc de Chartres he might have withdrawn his praise.<sup>1</sup> Even the dainty Mme. de Sabran accepts beer from an English merchant "which had almost intoxicated us."<sup>2</sup> "An hundred anecdotes and an hundred thousand examples," wrote Morris in 1789, "are required to show the extreme rottenness of every member. There are men and women who are greatly and eminently virtuous, but they stand forward from a background deeply and darkly shaded."<sup>3</sup> "Paris," he writes again in October, "is perhaps as wicked a spot as exists. Incest, murder, bestiality, fraud, rapine, oppression, baseness, cruelty: and yet this is the city that has stepped forward in the sacred cause of liberty."<sup>4</sup> No longer does it hide its immorality under a mask of courtesy and polish, it is a scene of "filth and riot"; the respectable inhabitants are afraid of being seen or even dressed with common decency.<sup>5</sup> The fashion of subdued and negligent attire, that in their zeal for English forms they have borrowed from their neighbours, has been returned with interest, till Walpole meets in London the "hats and valences, the folds above the chins of the ladies, the dirty shirts and shaggy hair of the young men who have levelled nobility."<sup>6</sup>

## § 2. *The Gambling Spirit*

The introduction of the high play that was common in England exerted equally disastrous effects upon the polished Society of France. "I cannot tell you," wrote the Chevalier de l'Isle in 1781, "how glad I am that they have dethroned

<sup>1</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. I. p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Madame de Sabran.*

<sup>3</sup> Morris, *Diary*, Vol. I. p. 69. He quotes some of these examples, e. g. "an old woman plays on the *vielle* to a mixed company, accompanying her music with loose songs." Writing of 1784, Ségur remarks that Crébillon and Voisenon could no longer be produced in company, but there is a considerable amount of evidence that on the whole the morals of society were loose. It would seem that intercourse with the Americans improved the officers of Rochambeau's contingent, but the intercourse with English society was not improving.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 201.

<sup>5</sup> Grace Elliott.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, XIV. p. 436 (Walpole).

that King of Egypt, that usurper that reigned at the expense of graces and gallantry.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, the consuming passion for pharaon and E. O., for biribi, creps and *passe-partout* was as effectual as the adoption of the English dress in destroying the almost chivalrous courtesy that had existed till then. Indulgence in card games had, of course, long been common to the two nations, and the first effect of incipient Anglomania was merely the introduction of the English whist into France.<sup>2</sup> Some of those ladies who were most closely connected with the English nobility began to show signs of increased eagerness for the pleasures of the card-table. Mme. de Luxembourg was seized with a passion for play; Mme. de Boufflers is stigmatised as *joueuse éternelle*; Mme. de Mirepoix now and again “gives her fortune a wicked blow at pharaon”; at Choiseul’s great assemblies (on his return to Paris) there is “a great table in the midst where they play all kinds of games: tables of whist, piquet, *comète*, and three or four backgammon boards.”<sup>3</sup> When Fox and Fitzpatrick were enjoying the *salons* of Paris in 1777—the time when play was at its height in England—their reckless gambling proved most infectious. “Your young people,” writes Mme. du Deffand of this visit, “have left much money here; they have excited the gaming madness, and people now speak only of a thousand louis: four or five hundred louis they do not condescend to quote.”<sup>4</sup> From this time forward the same high play that was the scandal of the English Society of the period appears in France. At the fête in honour of the birth of the Empress’s grandson in 1778 there were three halls filled with bankers of pharaon, and of biribi, and with players, “pitiless players.”<sup>5</sup> After the ball the dancers went to bed and there remained only the play, which was prolonged till the next morning. In the same year the Duc de Lauzun in

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* of Comte de l’Isle to Prince de Ligne, March 15, 1781.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole told the French they had adopted the two dullest things we had, Whisk and Richardson. “You need not be afraid of being forgot while Whisk is played in that house,” writes Carlisle to Selwyn.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* of Mme. du Deffand.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 22, 1777.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters* of Mme. de Sabran, May 8, 1778.

England was reported to be losing more money than he could ever pay,<sup>1</sup> and accumulating on the race-course and at the gaming-table two millions of livres of debts. The rage for pharaon extends even to the *salon* of the Queen, and in one evening the Duc de Chartres loses 8000 louis there.<sup>2</sup> At her ball "it was little pleasure," writes Mme. d'Oberkirch, "to look on at the gaming-tables, where so many thoughtless people were losing their money."<sup>3</sup> In 1786 the Count de Castellane, by losing 800,000 livres at M. d'Aremberg's, completely ruined himself.<sup>4</sup> From the Court and the *noblesse* the passion spread to the people. Some of the clubs founded about 1784 developed into gambling hells. In 1789, "everywhere on the quays, in the squares, in the boulevards, men carrying little folding-stools under their coats display a game which shuts up like a geographical map, while other men at the side rattle a bag of money. At the rattling a circle forms; farthings, pence, soon silver goes into the bag; the gambler ruined, the police appear and both men and game vanish"<sup>5</sup>—the Parisian parallel to the swarms of E. O. tables at which any poor man with a shilling might try his luck, and which might be found all over London in 1781.<sup>6</sup> The Palais Royal in 1791 contained forty public gaming-tables with their "necessary complement of 2000 *filles de joye*."<sup>7</sup> There are gaming-tables for the highest as well as for the lowest rungs of the social ladder. The upper classes seize the excuse of cold breakfasts and teas à l'Anglaise. "Every one," says Goncourt, "arrogated to himself that famous permission to play so difficult to obtain under Sartine and Lenoir,"<sup>8</sup> and despite all condemnations gambling will survive till the days of the Terror.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* of Mme. du Deffand, Jan. 21, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Taine, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. III. p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters* of Mme. de Sabran, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> De Goncourt, p. 20, quoted from *Chronique de Paris*.

<sup>6</sup> Angelo, Vol. II. p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> Thicknesse. Last journey to Paris in Nicholl's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>8</sup> P. 22.

Nor was it only through the card-table and the dice-box that the gambling instinct showed itself. Speculation had been equally a disgrace to English Society since the days of the South Sea Bubble. Chatham's designs on the East India Company in 1767 were hampered by the rage for stock-jobbing that existed; Charles Townshend, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, was shrewdly suspected of vacillation in order to make a pecuniary profit from the consequent variations of stock.<sup>1</sup> French Society was not slow in following the example. "It is surprising," writes Hailes in 1785, "to see to what an excess the spirit of adventure and public gaming is arrived in this city. Estates are every day advertised to be sold to supply the means to speculate."<sup>2</sup> The passions aroused by the various forms of gambling destroy the polish of French Society, and it is a far cry indeed from that time when Mme. de Luxembourg, as the arbiter of taste, had condemned anything in conversation which displayed traces of ill-feeling to that at which the Comte de Provence is the only person who dared to restrain the anger of the Countess of Balbi when she lost at cards.<sup>3</sup>

### § 3. *The Race-course*

With the gambling comes the horse-racing; few of the visitors to England felt that their experience of English life was complete without a journey to Newmarket, and some, like the Duc de Lauzun, set up a stud there. In 1768 Selwyn writes, "A great many French are expected here for the Newmarket meeting, among others the Duc de Fronsac,"<sup>4</sup> and some, like Lauraguais, Conflans and Lauzun, threw themselves ardently into the new sport. The first horse-race in Paris was one in 1766 between Lord Forbes and Lauraguais, whose horse seems to have been poisoned by an English groom and failed to finish. The interest

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Hailes to Carmarthen, Aug. 11, 1785.

<sup>3</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch, Vol. II. p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> *Castle Howard MSS.*, Vol. I. p. 244.

excited was extreme: "All Paris was present; it was a fine, mild morning, and the spectacle of 4000 brilliant equipages, the young nobility of both sexes, etc., was very pleasing. Some of the princes of the blood were present, and there was a kind of second race among them afterwards. This frivolous, giddy nation amused themselves with this trifle for three days."<sup>1</sup> The fashion took: "The spirit of horse-racing has taken root," laughs Walpole, "and *petits palefreniers* will be substituted for *petits-mâîtres*."<sup>2</sup> As with all the English fashions, it thrived greatly under the rule of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette; the Queen was present at a race on the Plaines de Sablons in 1775 between the Duc de Lauzun, whose English jockey won the race, the Comte d'Artois, the Duc de Chartres and M. de Conflans. From this date the fashion establishes itself in France, and later in the same year Walpole writes, "Some of the Opposition have gone to Paris—to see horse-races."<sup>3</sup> They have adopted "the flower of our follies," and le Roi Pepin—a race-horse—is the horse in fashion. The Queen has evinced a decided fancy for horse-races, at which she frequently presides.<sup>4</sup> When the Duc de Chartres entertained Mary Robinson in 1781, he arranged races for her amusement, and during the succeeding years they were frequently held. Even in their exile the French coterie at Richmond kept the fancy for witnessing them, and spent their time at Newmarket or Ascot.

#### § 4. *The Decline of the Influence of Women*

"The traditions of delicate urbanity and a choice hospitality had yielded to thoughtless infatuations and an alloy of all the nations: there were no longer three or four reigning

<sup>1</sup> The race is mentioned by Walpole, *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. I. p. 154, and by the Duc de Croÿ, who gives 2000 as the number of coaches (Vol. II. p. 224). The passage quoted is from Wilkes' *Correspondence*, March 3, 1766. What to Wilkes is a ridiculous horse-race, is to Croÿ "the beautiful sight."

<sup>2</sup> Walpole, *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. I. p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, IX. p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> Ségur, Vol. I. p. 131.

*salons* by which one had to pass through one's noviciate of the proprieties before entering on the great world. There were ten—nay, a hundred—by which access into all spheres was to be obtained.”<sup>1</sup> These words of Lescure emphasise what was undoubtedly the great change that occurred in the social arrangements of the great world. With the death of Mme. Geoffrin and Mme. du Deffand, and the appearance of innumerable aspirants to their sway, the reign of women in Paris comes to an end. No longer does one woman rule the social world, but the *salons* multiply, each hostess endeavouring by some characteristic novelty to attract the men of letters and the visitors. There is Mme. Necker, the successor of Mme. Geoffrin in so far as the Academicians frequent her table; there is Mme. de Tessé whose *salon* is wholly republican. The drawing-room of Mme. de Créquy is an areopagus where bitter sarcasms are uttered against her enemies;<sup>2</sup> from Mme. Doubles' originate all the *nouvelles de main* that circulate through the metropolis;<sup>3</sup> there are Mme. de Chastellux and Mme. de Flahaut, the friend of Talleyrand and Gouverneur Morris, while the Duchess of Polignac three days a week received all France: “entre qui veut, dîne qui veut, soupe qui veut.”<sup>4</sup> Though this multiplication of *salons* and the political nature of the conversation struck a heavy blow at the old order, yet it was an innovation directly imported from England that dealt the severest stroke at the influence of women.<sup>5</sup> We have seen the intense interest which was excited in French travellers by the English clubs, an interest which is confirmed by the formation of a “Club à l'Anglaise,” to which Charles Fox was invited in 1769 by Lauzun and Fitzjames, and à propos of which he writes, “I am glad to see that we cannot be foolisher in point of imitation than

<sup>1</sup> Rivarol, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch, Vol. II. p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II. p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> Chevalier de l'Isle to Prince de Ligne, Nov. 24, 1782.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Ségur, speaking of the rise of clubs, “At the commencement, its first effect was to separate the men from the women, and thus produce a change in our manners which became less frivolous but also less polite, more manly but less amiable” (Vol. II. p. 26).

they are.”<sup>1</sup> Even without the distinctive title of this experiment the fact that the origin of political clubs in France is to be traced to the period of Anglomania is proof of the source from which the inspiration sprung. “We also began to establish clubs where numbers assembled not as yet to discuss, but to dine, play whist and read the new publications,” writes Ségur of this time.<sup>2</sup> Brissot tells us that in 1783 he planned a “Club Philosophique” to include D’Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet and the great philosophers of the day, but the plan, though readily received, was not wholly successful.<sup>3</sup> The club which afterwards became the terrible Propagande was founded in 1786 by Rochefoucauld, Condorcet and the Abbé Sieyès.<sup>4</sup> In 1787 the Government suppressed these clubs, giving as a reason the licentious conversations reported to have been held against the sovereign and his ministers, but the suppression evoked a storm of protest and was abandoned.<sup>5</sup> In 1789 the clubs are numerous: the nobility frequent the Salon des Princes; there is the Club des Cordeliers, the Club des Feuillants, the Club de Valois, of which Morris is a member, the Club Politique, which Huber describes as “really composed *de la meilleure société de Paris*”;<sup>6</sup> even the valets imitate their masters, and meet every day at the Hôtel de Ville, where they form a club in three classes, “La Bouche, L’Écurie et La Chambre”;<sup>7</sup> there are, as Carlyle puts it, “germs of many clubs.” “You will remark,” writes Moore to Burges in 1791, “the dangerous influence which the Clubocatrie have acquired in those as well as other parts of the kingdom,”<sup>8</sup> a danger which the history of the Revolution only too clearly exemplified.

The spread of Freemasonry fostered the process; and when

<sup>1</sup> Jesse, Fox to Selwyn, Oct. 25, 1769.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II. p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. II. p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Hailes to Carmarthen, Aug. 23, 1787; comp. Jefferson, Vol. II. p. 227.

<sup>6</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 306.

<sup>7</sup> De Goncourt.

<sup>8</sup> *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. II. p. 153.

the clubs were suppressed, the same discussions may have taken place in the Masonic Lodges. A few lodges had been formed at the beginning of the century, but it was not till the taste for philosophy and mysticism spread that "lodges multiplied enormously; there was no coterie which hadn't its lodge; there were fêtes and balls, and they played comedies; the French Masons did not resemble the sombre Rosicrucians of England and Germany any more than our first literary clubs resembled the political ones."<sup>1</sup> About 1770 lodges for women were also formed, and these meetings, which at first had only a social interest, became so many opportunities of discussing politics and public affairs. "Their meetings became philosophical lyceums, where, under the mask of Freemasonry, they discussed without restraint all sorts of subjects."<sup>2</sup> There are several reasons to account for the spread of Freemasonry. The age was an age of benevolence and philanthropy, with which the principles of the order were in agreement. It was a time, too, when men were prodigiously fond of the orders of chivalry, and Freemasonry seemed to them to offer opportunities for "bedaubing themselves with cordons."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, membership was a passport of no mean value to those who travelled in England, where the Duc de Chartres, the Grand Master of the Order in France, had received his initiation.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to estimate the effect of the popularity of Freemasonry on the Revolution. In 1797 Robison claimed that it was the consummation of a plot of the philosophers, Freemasons and *Illuminati*, but this was denied by Mounier. The Baronne de Méré takes much the same point of view as Robison. Mounier's argument is to the effect that there were more Freemasons among the emigrants than among the partisans of the Revolution.<sup>5</sup> Two things one may say with certainty. Firstly, when the term "brother" was

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Princesse de Lamballe*, I. p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Mounier, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of the Princesse de Lamballe*, p. I. 255.

<sup>5</sup> Mounier, p. 167. But it must be remembered that many of the later emigrants were nobles with liberal views.

applied indiscriminately to the greatest noble, the bourgeois of mean birth, or the financier, social equality was for the first time introduced; <sup>1</sup> and secondly, the separation of the sexes was probably promoted as much by the introduction of Freemasonry as it was by the growth of clubs. As for the alleged conversations, while nothing is more probable than that the majority joined the Freemasons innocently and to be in fashion, yet a few would probably make use of this, as of every other opportunity, for planning the brochures that educated the revolutionary public.

### § 5. *Duelling and Suicide*

The English influence pervaded every aspect of manners; if French dragoons kill themselves, it is to be *à l'Anglaise*. "It is a habit they say we get from you, this *manière de seminer*," <sup>2</sup> writes Mme. du Deffand in 1778. Certainly under the combined influence of high play and the Anglomania suicides increased in France, for the French had always regarded self-murder as a characteristic of the melancholy Englishman: "An Englishman who travels," wrote Diderot, "is often only a man who goes out of his country to kill himself elsewhere." <sup>3</sup> Again the period of the Revolution witnessed a remarkable outburst of duelling, when the heat of debate embroiled now Barnave and Noailles, now Lameth and Cazalés or Bazancourt and St. Elme; for this the example of several notorious political duels in England, such as those of Wilkes and Martin or Fullarton and Shelburne, and the recent importation from England of the pistol duel, were partly responsible. On the days when duels were to be seen "the company was charming and of the

<sup>1</sup> Comp. the verses used at the inauguration of the Princesse de Lamballe.

" L'Égalité,  
L'Humanité,  
Voilà nos lois suprêmes " (*Memoirs*, p. 262).

<sup>2</sup> Mme. du Deffand, Jan. 21, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> *Lettres à Mlle. Voland*, p. 24.

best tone : fifty coaches awaited the scattering of some one's brains." <sup>1</sup> In 1790 a challenge and a rendezvous in the Bois de Boulogne was quite the proper thing, <sup>2</sup> and thus was developed the bloodthirsty spirit that disgraced the Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> De Goncourt.

<sup>2</sup> Morris, Vol. I. p. 367.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REVOLUTION IN TASTES

#### § I. *Tastes of Society.*

AMONG the most striking of the changes which the closing years of the century were to witness in the structure of French Society is the gradual levelling of class distinctions. We have already seen how the externals of the English dress covered the development of republican and democratic ideas; we have now to examine some of those new habits of Society of which the tendency was to accelerate the progress of the conception of equality. The craze for amateur acting, the popularity of masked balls, the rapid increase in the importance of the literary classes, and the adoption of a taste for philosophy, science and mysticism, undoubtedly offered scope for the practical application of theories. The aristocrat whose fancy is to strut the boards views the professional actor in a new light; at the masked ball social distinctions are forgotten; in the lecture-room of La Harpe or in the cabinet of Cagliostro the *grande dame* may seat herself beside the wife of the bourgeois, when both are votaries of the same science.

Essentially, French Society had unknowingly indulged in acting long before this time, for it was an age when men lived in a continual round of theatrical display; but the change from unconscious representation to the performance of a stage play seems to have originated with certain sections of English Society, a fact for which the superior status of the actor and the more democratic nature of the aristocracy supplies ample reason. At the Duke of Richmond's ball in 1763 many of the nobility sang; <sup>1</sup> a few years later, in 1766,

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Register*, May 1763.

Charles Fox and Lady Sarah Bunbury gained great applause at Southampton,<sup>1</sup> and in 1767 Stephen and Charles Fox, Lady Mary Fox, Lord Carlisle, Harry and Lady Sarah Bunbury performed two plays at Winterslow,<sup>2</sup> while Addison's *Cato* was given at Lady Townshend's, *Venice Preserved* at Lord Mulgrave's,<sup>3</sup> and the *Fair Penitent* at Lady Mexborough's, the Duke of York taking part in the last.<sup>4</sup> With the advent of the new French Court, amateur acting becomes the rage in France. "Almost all are Society actors," writes Taine, who gives 1767 as the very earliest date, and adds, "Towards 1770 it became an incredible rage";<sup>5</sup> and the passion for representation finds its outlets from the private diversions of the Court<sup>6</sup> to the Masonic Lodge, from the Société Badine to the public spectacles at Trianon, where the troupe in which Her Majesty herself is an actress performed *La Vieille Villageoise*, *Le Sage Étourdi*, and Heaven only knows what else.<sup>7</sup> Some of the earliest performances in France take place at houses where the English influence is exceptionally marked; thus, among the first mentioned by Mme. de Genlis, herself a victim of the craze, are those of the *Cobbler and Financier* and *Les Plaideurs* at L'Ile Adam, where a portable stage had been erected, and others at Villers Cotterêts, the seat of the Duc d'Orleans.<sup>8</sup> From this time forward the popularity of amateur acting is well established on both sides of the Channel. The Duke

<sup>1</sup> *Journals* of Lady Mary Coke, Vol. I. p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters* of Lady Sarah Lennox, Vol. I. p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> Angelo, *Reminiscences*, Vol. I. p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> *Journals* of Lady Mary Coke, Vol. I. p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> Pp. 200-201.

<sup>6</sup> Comp. Prince de Ligne, "The Ducs de Polignac and Esterhazy, masked like Loves, cast themselves on him and hold him (Comte d'Artois) almost strangled in an armchair. The Duc de Guiche as a Genius held his head. The Duc de Coigny preceded me and sang, 'V'là la plaisir! V'là la plaisir!' I had a dress with two great wings like those of the Cherubim in a village parish church: the Queen, Mmes. de Polignac, de Guiche, and de Polastron were like shepherdesses; de l'Isle like a shepherd with a sheep" (*Memoirs*, p. 78).

<sup>7</sup> Comte de l'Isle to Prince de Ligne, April 1792. Comp. Besenval, "The Queen was then at Trianon with her intimate society to play comedy" (1781).

<sup>8</sup> Madame de Genlis, Vol. I. p. 238. L'Ile Adam was the seat of the Prince de Conti and was presided over by Mme. de Boufflers.

of Richmond built a private theatre at which plays were frequently acted, and a motion in the House of Commons was on one occasion postponed in order that Pitt might be present;<sup>1</sup> Lord Barrymore had a private theatre at Wargrave, and with his sister performed the *Beaux' Stratagem* in Squibs' auction-room;<sup>2</sup> M. de Guémenée spent the winter—and his creditors' money—in giving magnificent spectacles in a theatre which he had caused to be rebuilt;<sup>3</sup> in the Rue St. Antoine there existed an "amateur theatre."<sup>4</sup> It is not on the formal stage only that they act. When Walpole, who, with his ceaseless affectations and his pretended philosophy, is more typically French than English, wished to entertain his foreign guests, he greeted them at the gates of his "castle" dressed in a cravat of Gibbons' carving and wearing a pair of gloves embroidered to the elbow that had belonged to James I;<sup>5</sup> when Marie Antoinette wished to throw off the cares of royalty she retired to little Trianon, where the Park might represent a fair, her ladies the merchants, and she herself a lemonade-seller.<sup>6</sup>

The increased popularity of the stage resulted in a corresponding improvement in the position of the actor. In France he was excluded from the rights of citizenship and could be disinherited; he received no honours or distinction from Society, such as Garrick obtained in England. English actors and actresses went to France, and their superior status excited the envy of their fellows in Paris. Foote visited Prévile; Garrick himself went in 1765, and his numerous friends opened to him the doors of all the *salons*, where alone, and surrounded by faces which almost touched his, he played the greatest scenes of the English theatre.<sup>7</sup> He is heard of at d'Holbach's, at Helvetius', and at Mme. Geoffrin's, while Molé, Grimm, Marmontel, Mme. Riccoboni, Ducis, Monnet, Suard, Le Kain, Necker and other notable

<sup>1</sup> Miss Berry, Vol. II. p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> For Lord Barrymore see Angelo, Vol. I. p. 235, and Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIV. p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> Besenval, Vol. II. p. 274.

<sup>4</sup> De Goncourt.

<sup>5</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. VII. p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> Taine, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup> Garat, Vol. II. p. 128.

literary or theatrical personages are among his correspondents. His opinion was widely sought on any question relating to dramatic art: there is a letter in the *Garrick Correspondence* from Suard begging for his interpretation of certain vexed passages from Shakespeare which neither Lord Stormont nor Maty could expound; "there are numbers who are passionately fond of all that bears the name of Garrick."<sup>1</sup> May we not ascribe to this influence some part of the improved conditions of the actor's life in France in the years that followed this visit? "We hope, dear Garrick," wrote Molé, "that by dint of regularity of manners we shall obtain from the French a little of that distinction with which thy talents are honoured in England."<sup>2</sup> The hope was justified, but one cannot help thinking that the thin end of the wedge was inserted by the English actor of whom it could be said that in Paris he "grew mighty pert with the great rout that was made of him."<sup>3</sup>

Masquerades, too, which were popular even in George II's reign, seem to have entertained English Society both in London and at Spa before they became the rage in France, and from the descriptions of them that survive, it is evident that the English masquerade was well adapted for encouraging sentiments of equality. Vauxhall is described as attracting "a blackguardish company with a dash of good company," and Angelo had often seen the Duchess of Devonshire and others of the nobility supping there.<sup>4</sup> Of the Pantheon he writes that the Prince of Wales was often present, while Mme. Cornelys in Soho attracted half the town. Many of the aristocracy received masks at their houses *sans billets*, and at the King of Denmark's in 1768 the company was very mixed, and comprised "all the kept ladies in town."<sup>5</sup> The masked ball was one which

<sup>1</sup> Suard to Garrick, *Garrick Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 622.

<sup>2</sup> Molé to Garrick, *ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 435.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* of Lady Sarah Lennox, Vol. I. p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> Angelo, Vol. II. p. 251.

<sup>5</sup> *Journals* of Lady Mary Coke, Vol. II. p. 383.

was eminently suited to the immoral temper of the times, and as such its success in France was assured. It was not long before they erected the Colisée, "a most gaudy Ran-elagh, gilt-painted, and becupided like an opera . . . composed of chalk and paste-board."<sup>1</sup> Masquerades are a feature of French life in the latter part of the century, and it was at one of them that occurred the fracas which resulted in the notorious duel of the Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Bourbon.

During the last few years of the *ancien régime* the literary classes became all-powerful in Paris. One may see the germ of this in the reverence which hovered at an earlier date round the names of Voltaire and Rousseau. On the third floor of the Rue de Prouvaires the author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* received the homage of a great part of France;<sup>2</sup> Voltaire's reception on his return in 1778 was extraordinary. There was much to justify this worship; the Frenchman, ever proud of his country, saw in them men who had spread through the nations of Europe the glory of the French literature and were rendering its language universal. When sovereigns recognised their worth, when the foreigners who flocked to Paris eagerly sought to see them, it was idle to exclude them from the houses of the rich. Their successors profited by the honour they had won, and the welcome that had been extended by the *noblesse* to Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, and Marmontel became a preponderance in the hands of Rivarol, Chamfort and De Lille. Without the English influence the process would undoubtedly have still been inevitable; its causes lie too deep in the character of the French and the peculiar brilliance of contemporary intellect in France. Yet, dabble in literature though he would, it was thought wrong for a nobleman to publish,<sup>3</sup> and the translations of Ossian in which Mme. d'Aiguillon indulged, the plays which proceeded from the pen of Mme. de Boufflers, and the fables of the Duc de

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. VIII. p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. VIII. p. 276.

Nivernois were but idle amusements. Rank and literature did not harmonise till their growing knowledge of the history of England showed the French nobility the result of that patronage<sup>1</sup> that promoted the literary achievements of the English Augustan age, and produced the works they all admired. Indeed, English literature was exceedingly popular in Paris. The foundation of the *Gazette Littéraire* and the *Journal des Étrangers* introduced its masterpieces to the French;<sup>2</sup> the works of its authors were frequently sent by Englishmen as complimentary presents; Hume, Gibbon, and Adam Smith became the rage; Richardson was read everywhere; Robertson's *Charles V* was the favourite work, even of ladies; Young, Pope, Macpherson, Milton, Shakespeare, all appealed for the first time to French readers, who began to associate literary output with the liberty enjoyed under the English constitution.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the visitors showed great appreciation of men of letters in Paris; Lord Stormont lived much with the philosophers in the intervals of diplomacy;<sup>4</sup> Helvetius in 1764, Morellet in 1772, and Raynal in 1778 were welcomed at the houses of the nobility in England; Rousseau was pensioned by George III; every one sought an introduction to the *salons* of Mme. Geoffrin and of Mlle. de l'Espinasse, where the philosophers were to be met. This reciprocal admiration of each other's brains sent Englishmen to France to study French and Frenchmen to England to study English, and the example of a nobility which for half a century had patronised its men of letters was ever present to an aristocracy which was just beginning to do so.

Yet one more Society craze tended to promote the levelling process. Men and women were smitten with a sudden

<sup>1</sup> "Nothing interests Voltaire so deeply as the homage paid, and paid by all classes, to intellectual eminence" in England (Churton Collins, p. 51).

<sup>2</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Mme. de Boufflers, thanking Lady Mary Coke for an offer of the works of Gray, writes, in order to prove the French free, "We should never have produced the great men or the beautiful works that are the admiration of Europe if we had been in slavery." The same reasoning many French applied to England.

<sup>4</sup> Garat, Vol. II. p. 89.

admiration for the marvellous, and an age remarkable for its infidelity in matters of religion was equally remarkable for its credulity in other things. The extraordinary vogue of Cagliostro is only one aspect of a fashion affecting the nobility of both nations from which many inferior rogues extracted its superfluous wealth by means of various magical impositions. While all Paris was following Cagliostro, or crowding the *baquet* of Mesmer,<sup>1</sup> English Society put its modesty in its pocket in order to listen to the notorious Doctor Graham,<sup>2</sup> or experienced novel sensations at the hands of Manneduke. "All the fine people have been magnetised," writes Elliot to his wife, "and are learning to magnetise others. The Prince of Wales had a crisis, that is to say, became sick and faint." "It is the grossest dupery imaginable," he writes again, "but there were several people one knows among the dupes."<sup>3</sup> In France the story is the same: "Nothing else was to be seen in the great towns of France but women in convulsions and fools exerting themselves by their grimaces to frighten them."<sup>4</sup> The genuine revolutionaries encouraged the craze, and under the pretence of studying animal magnetism prepared the pamphlets that disseminated their ideas.<sup>5</sup> Nor was it only in false science that interest was aroused; when Montgolfier invented the balloon "they clubbed together to praise balloons; ladies did their hair in balloons; small parties formed themselves into balloons; little theatres played balloons, and foreigners were astonished at our enthusiasm."<sup>6</sup> Yet in England the interest was equally great: "All our views," writes Walpole, "are directed to the air; balloons occupy senators, philosophers, ladies, everybody."<sup>7</sup> "The India Bill, air-balloons, Vestris and the automaton share

<sup>1</sup> Mme. d'Oberkirch, "The furor was not a whit less at Paris . . . a dozen women of rank, as well as two actresses, had followed Cagliostro" (*Mémoires*, Vol. I. p. 179). Also "Mesmer's celebrated *baquet* attracted both Court and city" (Vol. II. p. 280). Comp. also Ségur, Vol. I. p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Angelo, Vol. I. p. 95, and Vol. II. p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, July 4, 1786, and p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Mounier, p. 143. Comp. Sinclair, "Animal magnetism which was then in vogue" (Vol. II. p. 95).

<sup>5</sup> Brissot, Vol. II. p. 415.

<sup>6</sup> Rivarol, quoted by Lescure.

<sup>7</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIII. p. 96.

all attention.”<sup>1</sup> Deeper scientific problems even than the navigation of the air distress the ladies, and this aspect of the time is most marked in France. At the lectures of La Harpe on Shakespeare, of Fourcroy on Chemistry, of Nollet on Electricity, and Petit on Anatomy, the Lycées were crowded;<sup>2</sup> the voyages of Bruce and Brown initiate the study of Egyptology in Paris;<sup>3</sup> Panckoucke finds that encyclopædias, with their close-packed information, pay better than books;<sup>4</sup> societies of twenty or twenty-five people are formed to follow a course in one of the applied sciences;<sup>5</sup> in the private room of a lady of fashion one may find dictionaries of natural history or treatises on chemistry or physics. In England it is the *ton* to talk agriculture;<sup>6</sup> the topics in season “are fixed air, electricity and solar microscopes”;<sup>7</sup> ladies like young Lady Webster or Lady Malmesbury are studying chemistry, philosophy or geometry.<sup>8</sup> “When life is taken in this way,” says Taine, “a philosopher with all his brains is as necessary in a *salon* as a lustre with all its lights.”<sup>9</sup> And here I am inclined to think we have the source of the Anglomania which attacked Society. The brilliant scientists of the age had a sincere respect for the land whence these growing sciences had first drawn the breath of life; Lavoisier, Guyton de Morveau, Berthollet did not forget that Black, and Priestley, and Cavendish had laid the practical foundation of their theories; Laplace but carried on the science that Black by his investigation of latent heat had rendered possible; Clairaut and D’Alembert owed their success in solving the mysteries of the skies to the theory that Newton had investigated and two generations of French mathematicians had developed; Condillac was but the successor

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIII. p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> See Lecky, Vol. V. p. 350.

<sup>3</sup> Garat, Vol. II. p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 272.

<sup>5</sup> Mme. de Genlis, Vol. II. p. 256.

<sup>6</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XII. p. 307. Comp. as early as 1766 Lady Mary Coke’s *Journal*, “We talked till near eight on agriculture and the culture of white thorns.”

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XI. p. 39. The reference is to Herschel’s discovery.

<sup>8</sup> *Diary* of Elizabeth, Lady Holland.

<sup>9</sup> Taine.

of Locke.<sup>1</sup> Enthusiastic Frenchmen dreamed of England and France, by the combined wealth of their mental resources, reforming the world and spreading everywhere the light of their intelligence; <sup>2</sup> others, more self-seeking, adopted with the scientific catch-phrases that were to be their passport into polite Society <sup>3</sup> glib references to the English scientists, and all united in attributing the early development of learning in England to the liberty and freedom that its inhabitants enjoyed.

Thus Society, impelled by its new frivolities and its new enthusiasms, throws over the traces of its old exclusiveness. The actor and the man of letters are admitted to a new intimacy, and mix on an equality with the highest ranks of the social order. In the *salons* of Mme. de Créquy, Mme. de Tessé, and Mme. de Chastellux are now to be seen "makers of epics, dramas, romances and of fugitive verse; and young mathematicians who, though young, have beaten back the boundaries of mathematics."<sup>4</sup> The virtual freedom of the Press and of thought is established, for the Government must exercise more care in the use of *lettres de cachet* against those who are protected by powerful friends.

Finally, the social order is changing and the multiplied and varied communications of all the most illustrious nations of Europe with the active genius of the French is rapidly bringing on the fulfilment of Rousseau's prophecy, "The age of Revolutions approaches."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thus Montgolfier told Sinclair that his discovery was due to Black's work on the varying density of gases (Vol. II. p. 86).

<sup>2</sup> Garat, II. pp. 49 *et seq.* Thus also Biron's friendship with the English nobility made an alliance with them a favourite political dream. See Gower, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Mme. de Staël, quoted by Miss Berry, Vol. I. p. 305: "There are on each subject so many catch phrases that a fool with their aid speaks well enough and resembles for a minute a man of wit."

<sup>4</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Garat, Vol. II. p. 230.

§ 2. *The English Drama in France*

Nothing, perhaps, is as indicative of the tastes and sentiments of a society of mankind as the drama that delights its idle hours; in an heroic age, an heroic play succeeds; in an immoral age, the licentious comedy of Wycherley and Congreve; in a polished age, the stately tragedy of Corneille and Racine; in a frivolous one, the musical comedy of the present day. Thus the history of the plays enjoyed by the Parisian public during the pre-Revolution period has more than a theatrical interest, for it is the index of the changes slowly developing in men's minds. There must have been a vast difference between the habits and ideas of the men and women who enjoyed *Aristomène* or *Zaïre* and those of the audience that applauded *Charles IX*. A sickly sentimentality has appeared, to be followed by a love of the terrible—a new phenomenon in France. The public loves to weep; it is unsatisfied if the reality of the representation or the pathos of the situations fails to leave it dissolved in tears. The pseudo-classic drama of the elder Crébillon or of Voltaire no longer meets its mood, for there is too little of human sympathy in their plays; they must have either the comedy of real life, which, like *Le Mariage de Figaro*, mocks at a Society they know and understand, the comedy of homely life like *The Three Farmers* of Monvel, or what Cubières terms the “ludicrously burlesque machinery of Drury Lane,” where they lavish “scaffolds, coffins, gallows and a thousand other puerile inducements to terror.”<sup>1</sup> When Clairon appeared in *Electra* in a simple slave's dress<sup>2</sup> replacing the mourning robe and *panier* she had previously worn in the part, and when actors and actresses ceased to represent ancient heroes in eighteenth-century Court dress, the process had already begun. When Ducis violated the hallowed rules which had shackled the stage since Corneille's day, the signs of change became apparent. Men like

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Sur la Manie des Drame Sombres*.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Marmontel*, p. 198.

Galiani began to wonder why it is not allowed to render scenes like the fall of Choiseul, nor even that of the Cardinal de Bernis on the stage. Men like Chénier began to do it, and with *Charles IX* "the flag of the Revolution," the "dreadful tragedy," has come in all its force.<sup>1</sup> To Morris the piece is calculated to give a fatal blow to the Catholic religion;<sup>2</sup> to Chénier himself it pictures the crimes of kings; but to the woollen caps and greasy hats of the boulevards who thronged the Théâtre des Associés it speaks of bloodshed and murder and the guillotine.

In the theatrical education of republicans the English drama has played its part. For to the French the "English genius breathes tragedy; terror is the sensation most predominant over a gloomy and melancholy people who have been nursed in Revolutions."<sup>3</sup> The English tragedies, "though interesting and filled with beauties, are so many dramatic monsters, half butchery and half farce."<sup>4</sup> This view of Shakespeare's tragedies dies hard in France; in fact, plays like his were foreign to the intellect of French Society, and one may be allowed to suspect that with the nobility the popularity they attained was in many cases merely a matter of tone. Shakespeare seems to have been quite unknown to the French until Voltaire, in his *Letters on the English* (1731), and Prévost in 1738 paid a tribute to the beauties of his plays, and from that time forward the popularity of his works gradually increased in France. Voltaire's *Mort de César* was directly modelled on *Julius Cæsar*, and traces of the English poet's influence have been seen in *Brutus*, *Semiramis* and *Zaïre*. President Hénault, in *François II*, 1745, professes to imitate Shakespeare, but with a careful avoidance of his "extravagance and coarseness." The habit of permitting the privileged spectators to sit upon the stage hampered the representation of any but plays of the older French type, with their few *dramatis personæ*, but when Lauraguais, at his own expense, had removed this

<sup>1</sup> Goncourt, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm's *Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I. p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> Dourx, *Ridicules*.

hindrance, the way was cleared for the great impulse to the English drama that followed on the visit of Garrick in 1765. For Garrick was a power in France; it is but necessary to read his foreign correspondence to realise that, and in the words of his friends, "Garrick was meant for Shakespeare and Shakespeare for Garrick!" To see him act was the ambition of every French visitor to England: d'Holbach saw him and the beautiful tomb "he has raised in his garden to the Manes of Shakespeare";<sup>1</sup> the Neckers made it the prime object of their journey, and Mme. Necker's enthusiasm knew no bounds;<sup>2</sup> Morellet went twice to Drury Lane, and meekly submitted to be called "French dog" when his reading of *Richard III* and *Othello* failed to acquire the great actor's approval.<sup>3</sup> Garrick's enthusiasm for Shakespeare communicated itself to the literary and artistic world of Paris, and but four years later Ducis made his first attempt at paraphrasing *Hamlet* into French, a performance which Brissot calls "insipid, flat, and maimed." Its success was undoubted, despite some want of approval for a style of drama wholly new. *Romeo and Juliet* came in 1772, *Lear* in 1783, *Macbeth* in 1784 and *Othello* in 1792, and upon these adaptations Ducis rested his fame. The Chevalier de Chastellux presented *Romeo and Juliet*, and "all the town rushed to see this pretended imitation of the revered poet of Great Britain." "I," says Mme. Riccoboni, "followed the torrent with two English friends, both very curious to see Shakespeare disguised in a French dress."<sup>4</sup> In 1771 his works in English, finely bound in seven folio volumes, were presented to King Louis XV, but the climax came with the literal translation of Catuelin, Fontaine, Malherbe and Le Tourneur, published in 1776, to which Walpole seems to refer when he says, "They are translating Shakespeare into French, and the work is so well done that

<sup>1</sup> Diderot, *Lettres à Mlle. Voland*, Sept. 20, 1765.

<sup>2</sup> See Mme. Necker's letters in the *Garrick Correspondence and Letters of Mme. du Deffand*, 1776: Miss Berry, II. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of Morellet*, Vol. I. chap. ix.

<sup>4</sup> *Garrick Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 575.

it has incredible success.”<sup>1</sup> “We have not,” writes Grimm, “for a long time had any book published upon which people have disputed more eagerly.”<sup>2</sup> The excitement in the literary world was increased by the letter to the Academy in which Voltaire protested against this popularity of his ancient idol; Mrs. Montagu was present at the reading of the letter, and her reply, translated in 1777, but kept the flame alive—not a difficult task in a nation that had once before divided itself into Piccinists and Glückists. Other English dramatists of the Elizabethan period shared the success of Shakespeare: we find Grimm writing to Garrick with a request that he will perform *Every Man in his Humour*,<sup>3</sup> and Mme. Riccoboni gloating over the possession of Beaumont and Fletcher, a few pieces of Ben Jonson, and ten volumes of Old Comedies.<sup>4</sup>

The tragedy that awakes the sensation of pity and terror was harmless to the comparatively calm-natured Englishman of the day, whereas in the emotional Frenchman it stirred up an intensity of feeling that profoundly affected his character. Can we not see in these words of Brissot the forerunner of the feelings that rendered the Terror possible? “I love,” he says, “the terror which a gloomy forest, and those mournful caves where naught but bones and tombs are to be found, inspires in me. I love the howling of the winds, the precursors of the storm, the rumbling and the crashing of the thunder, and the torrential rain. . . In that minute there is for me a horrid charm and undefinable delight; that is undoubtedly the impression that Shakespeare and the dramatists who have imitated him produce—It is a need of the soul.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, with France in the mood of these thirty years, the introduction of the English drama was a dangerous experiment. There is a striking commentary on this in a play in which Cubières de Pal-mazeaux attempted to ridicule the reigning taste—*Sur la*

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, Vol. IX. p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> *Garrick Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 635.

<sup>5</sup> Brissot, *Mémoires*, Vol. I. p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm's *Corr.*, Vol. I. p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

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*manie des Drames Sombres*, first produced in 1776: the function of the heavy tragedy is to him,

“ De la Scène bannir l’aimable poème  
En chasser les héros, les Princes et les rois.  
Pour leur substituer d’insipides bourgeois.” <sup>1</sup>

Those who have expelled their kings from the theatre will not be long in expelling them from that larger stage, the country.

“ Oui, bravant la scandale  
*Je veux aller chercher mes héros à la Halle,*” <sup>2</sup>

a prophecy which 1793 was to see literally fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> Act I. sc. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Act I. sc. vi.

## CHAPTER V

### THE REVOLUTION IN IDEAS

#### § I. *On Political Ideas*

THERE does not, despite the works of Montesquieu and De Lolme, appear to have been at the time of the Revolution much clear comprehension of the English constitution; at the time of the Peace of Paris there was none at all. During the intervening period the association had introduced the forms of English parliamentary government to the notice of the French, but not its spirit. The laws of England had been studied and envied by men of mature age. The Parlements of France flattered themselves that they were possessed of the rights of a British Senate,<sup>1</sup> and the French aristocracy, even to the Princes of the Blood, imitated the Whig notions of England by espousing the cause of the Parlements in their struggle with the King. In the Assembly of the Notables some of the *noblesse* desired to play the part of the English Parliament, and opposed the Court party.<sup>2</sup> The authoress of the *Memoirs of Mme. de Lamballe* recollects that "they thought it needed but a Washington to establish in France the Anglo-American constitution."<sup>3</sup> Besenval conjectured that Brienne, brother of the Archbishop, when head of the War Office, was imbued with the mania for assimilating the French Government to that of England.<sup>4</sup> On the resignation of the Maréchal de Castries it was proposed to form a board to superintend naval matters, modelled on the English Board of Admiralty, but the proposal fell

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 175. Comp. Andrews, p. 264: "Most foreigners have a very limited knowledge of our constitution."

<sup>2</sup> Besenval, *Memoirs*, III. p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of Princesse de Lamballe*, Vol. I. p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. III. p. 230.

through.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when the Revolution broke out, there was found a moderate party among the *noblesse* who inclined to a constitution analogous to the English;<sup>2</sup> but their views were not shared by the great mass of deputies to the States-General, who, partly from a feeling that the English constitution was essentially aristocratic, and partly—misled by the American example—from ignorance of the real advantages of a limited monarchy and a two-chamber system, were disposed to believe in their capacity to evolve a brand-new constitution that should excel all others—not an unusual phenomenon in that self-satisfied eighteenth century, as witness Hume and Harrington. Yet there was much to explain this distrust. The domination of the great Whig families, which the King was endeavouring to crush, even though it evoked rosy dreams in the minds of the French *noblesse*, was not likely to appeal to those of the lower orders who were sighing for their individual freedom: the obvious corruption of the House of Commons—obvious even if the purer-minded statesmen of the time had not declaimed against it—pointed to a flaw in the workmanship; the taxes were excessive, and a constitution which offered no relief from the burden of taxation did not present a perfect appearance in the eyes of the tribute-laden bourgeoisie of France. Yet, though the popular element in the National Assembly distrusted the constitutional forms of England, the great English notions of Liberty of the Subject, Freedom of the Press, Trial by Jury,<sup>3</sup> and Rights of the People found their way into the minds of men during these thirty years of friendship. For the French who visited the Houses of Parliament had witnessed Meredith impugning the use of General Warrants, had heard the oft-quoted doctrine “*Salus populi suprema lex*,” and had seen Camden and Chatham indignantly

<sup>1</sup> Hailes to Carmarthen (*Dispatches from Paris*), p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson says that the *noblesse* of Paris on the whole were on the popular side, but not those of the country (*Correspondence*, ii. p. 462).

<sup>3</sup> Thus Brissot, *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 25, was chiefly guided in the exposition of his principles, as laid down in *Histoire universelle de la loi criminelle*, by the English law.

declaring their faith in the Sovereignty of the People. They had stayed in England when the country from north to south rang with the cry "Wilkes and liberty!" They had read the letters in which Junius lashed King, Commons and Prime Minister; they had known a party whose only protection against a corrupt House of Commons and the arbitrary exertion of the prerogative had been a perpetual iteration of the fundamentals of the constitution, and to whom to be a patriot meant to pronounce the words "country," "liberty" and "corruption."

Hence came that impetus that made young and enthusiastic Frenchmen pass from jockeys to considerations on the administration of the State,<sup>1</sup> from which princes like the Duc de Chartres drew those Republican notions that made them protest loudly against all that had been done by arbitrary power<sup>2</sup> in 1771 and 1787, and made women take part in discussions on public rights and transform their *salons* into miniature States-General;<sup>3</sup> and thus Marat, for instance, learnt the theory and practice of revolutionary agitation.<sup>4</sup> Though one should not, perhaps, under-estimate the effects produced by such books as De Lolme's *Constitution d'Angleterre*, or the various travellers' published accounts of their journeys (e. g. Grosley's tour), most of which gave some account of the English system of government, yet it is obvious that the means by which these ideas and the knowledge of parliamentary forms would be diffused among a far wider circle, and with far more emphasis than through the medium of literary expression, are two: the personal observation of French visitors to England, and the conversations in which they or their English guests in the *salons* would join. It is to be feared that many of the first nobility, when they visited England, paid rather more attention to masquerades and routs and the delights of

<sup>1</sup> Besenval, Vol. III. p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of the Princesse de Lamballe*, Vol. I. p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Besenval, Vol. II. p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Merivale, *Historical Studies*, quoted by H. S. Ashbee, *Marat en Angleterre*.

Newmarket than they did to the sterner interests of political debate, but it must have been impossible for them, in days when English Society was wholly absorbed in politics, to escape the conviction that their lives, separated as they were by the protective monarchy under which they lived from all interests of State, were emptier and idler than those of their English fellows. "Ah!" cried Mlle. de l'Espinasse on seeing Shelburne, "President Montesquieu is right: Government makes men. A man endued with energy, spirit and genius is in this country like a lion chained in a menagerie."<sup>1</sup> Ségur expresses the same idea: "The brilliant but frivolous life led by our nobility at Court and in the capital was no longer sufficient to satisfy our self-love when we reflected upon the dignity, the independence, and the comparatively useful and important life of an English peer or of a Member of the House of Commons; as well as upon the liberty, at once calm and lofty, enjoyed by the entire body of the citizens of Great Britain." La Fayette accepts a commission in the States army on the ground that, had he been a Colonel in the French one, he would have been needed more for counsel than for action!<sup>2</sup> It is evident that all the better men, those who felt in themselves an inborn capacity for leading mankind, must have chafed the more under the burden of the desultory life they were compelled to lead, as they contrasted it with the opportunities of the English aristocracy. cursory as many of the visits were—the Duc de Polignac's lasted precisely nine days—they served to show the obvious features of the English system and the consequent prosperity of the nation, and this was apparently why, when the Notables met, men clamoured for the States-General, feeling that in national representation lay the germs of national prosperity, but with that confused notion of political liberty that marked the Revolution. "I find," wrote Young, "a general ignorance of the principles of government and a strange

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Mlle. de l'Espinasse.*

<sup>2</sup> La Fayette, *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 86.

and unaccountable appeal to ideal and visionary rights of nature "1—"a visionary system," he adds, "always resenting itself in a most suspicious appearance to me, because its advocates . . . all affect to hold the English constitution cheap in respect of liberty, though they admit it is the best the world has seen."2 There were Frenchmen, more thoughtful and more far-seeing than the rest, who had studied the English constitution, and endeavoured to guide their fellows in the direction they desired—men who, in La Fayette's words, "persuaded of the actual convenience and the eternal necessity of hereditary royalty, tried to give us a *constitution à l'Anglaise*;"3 but their efforts were neutralised by the arguments of those who contended that the constitution of England was suited only to an insular nation, and who pointed to the troubles that had arisen from the exercise of the royal prerogative as proving that the King's authority was excessive; in fact, it is probable that Dunning's famous motion that the royal power had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished, was to a great extent responsible for this distrust. Such a man was the Duc de Liancour,4 who endeavoured to do his duty to his tenants by starting an English farm, and had introduced the manufacture of cotton and linen, stockings and cards on his estate. Such a man, too, was Mirabeau, roué as he was, whose experience of English customs, dating from his visit in 1784, led him to publish Romilly's letter on the English hospitals and his remarks on the English penal laws,5 who proposed to the Assembly a bourgeoisie militia on the lines of the English militia,6 and who remained till his death a partisan of

1 Young, Vol. I. p. 127. Comp. Sorel: "Many indeed speak of political liberty, but the greater part have only a confused notion of it." Romilly writes in 1789, "I found most exaggerated and extravagant notions of liberty entertained by many" (*Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 112).

2 Vol. I. p. 127.

3 *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 229.

4 Young, Vol. II. p. 142.

5 The source of this work is interesting as illustrating the method in which these ideas entered French heads. Mirabeau was present at Mr. Brand Hollis's with Wilkes and Gen. Miranda when a discussion on the point arose (Romilly).

6 It was rejected (Dumont).

↓ limited monarchy on the lines of the English system.<sup>1</sup> Such, too, were undoubtedly many of the less highly placed of French visitors to England, but unfortunately those whose rank and position would have enabled them to guide the Revolution into a calmer and less dangerous sea had employed their visits in frivolous and uninformative pleasures—in learning the vices rather than the stability of English Society.

If we reflect on the alternative means by which these ideas could filter into the minds of Frenchmen, we must rely to a great extent on purely circumstantial evidence, for few of the conversations have been actually recorded. When, however, we consider the frequent journeys to Paris of Members of the House of Commons, and the reception which awaited those who, like Sir John Sinclair,<sup>2</sup> had distinguished themselves by originality in matters of politics or economics, we are forced to the conclusion that many a Parisian supper-table heard the stories of famous debates, and learnt to apply the maxims of English law to the changing aspects of the French political drama. At the time of the Maupeou Parlement the “assemblies of Society,” says Besenval, “became little States-Generals where women, transformed into legislators, proclaimed the maxims of public right and quoted history in support.”<sup>3</sup> Theories of liberty were galvanised into life by the American War; the vogue of the Economists and the *compte rendu* of Necker brought finance into discussion; with the Assembly of the Notables the light and frivolous topics of the *salons* gave place to political arguments discussed “almost to the gates of Versailles.”<sup>4</sup> Rose was struck by the freedom of the conversation on general liberty, even within the walls of the King’s palace, as early as 1782.<sup>5</sup> “Men, women and

<sup>1</sup> Romilly’s evidence on this point is quite decisive! Mirabeau always had in view a constitution on the model of the English, he says. Mirabeau was also responsible for translating Romilly’s letter on the forms of the English Parliament, which, however, was ignored by the Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Garat, I. p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> *Diary*, Vol. I. p. 41.

children," writes Jefferson in 1789, "talk of nothing else; and all, you know, talk a good deal. The Press groans with daily productions that in point of boldness make an Englishman stare."<sup>1</sup> The halls of the palace resounded with seditious tenets "held by the innumerable crowd of lawyers. In this number one saw many young men of family and aristocratic birth who, under the externals of the English dress, forced themselves to display its spirit and its maxims."<sup>2</sup> There can be little doubt that constant association with English visitors, trained and interested in political argument, had proved a powerful force in the conversion of the fashionable idlers of Paris to this serious outlook. Brissot dates the turning-point in his career from his chance meeting with two English travellers;<sup>3</sup> the Duc de Croÿ often disputed with Lord Harcourt on "politics and peace";<sup>4</sup> Diderot mentions to Mlle. Voland "all the philosophy and politics we talked a few days formerly with our English";<sup>5</sup> Gibbon has recorded his dispute on republican theories with the Abbé Mably at the table of M. de Fonce-magne;<sup>6</sup> Walpole admits that he discussed with his friends in the Parlement the best means for them to succeed in their opposition to the Crown.<sup>7</sup> Mme. du Deffand has drawn a vivid picture of the cosmopolitan Society assembled in her apartment one evening, at a time when American politics were an all-absorbing topic: "I in my tonneau, M. Franklin beside me, with his fur cap on his head, and spectacles on nose; and then Mme. de Luxembourg, M. Silas Deane, Deputy from your Colonies, the Vicomte Beaune, M. le Roi, le Chevalier de Boutteville, M. le Duc de Choiseul, l'Abbé Barthélemi and young Elliot,<sup>8</sup> who closed the circle. If Fox or Fitzpatrick (who were then in Paris) had arrived

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 450. According to Jefferson the change took place between 1786 and 1789. ✓

<sup>2</sup> Besenval, *Memoirs*, Vol. III. p. 351.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Sept. 20, 1765.

<sup>7</sup> *Memoirs of Reign of George III*, Vol. II. p. 175.

<sup>8</sup> Probably Sir Gilbert Elliot or his brother Hugh, who were educated in Paris.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 467.

<sup>6</sup> *Autobiography*.

my room might have represented Westminster Hall.”<sup>1</sup> It was at meetings like this that Frenchmen acquired that intimate knowledge of the current politics of England by which they guided their own opposition to the Court, and though Mme. du Deffand does not retail the conversation, the evidence of Garat may supply us with material for a shrewd conjecture that at this and similar scenes abstract questions of government were the subject of debate. Discussing the two theories of government that floated round the supper-tables of Parisian *salonières*, that of Rousseau that the whole nation should be the representative body, and that of the admirers of English and American practice that it is through representatives that the will of the nation should be expressed, he says—

“The simultaneous publication of the *Social Contract* and the *Constitution d'Angleterre* rendered all the effects of these works wider, more rapid and more certain among all the peoples of Europe, and especially in France, where what is in the books passes more quickly into conversation, and is there more thoroughly investigated.”<sup>2</sup>

It was for a Society so constituted, daily mixing with English visitors, and increasingly disposed to political discussion that an unparalleled wealth of political or semi-political literature on the various aspects of the English Government appeared. The complete collection of the papers in Wilkes' case was published in 1767, and French ladies in 1770 wore handkerchiefs à la Wilkes on which was printed at full length his letter to the inhabitants of the county of Middlesex, with a picture of their hero in the midst.<sup>3</sup> The publication of the American constitution caused so much excitement that Franklin himself expressed his surprise at the French Government permitting it.<sup>4</sup> Yet the *Courrier de l'Europe* was allowed to give full accounts of the debates in the English Parliament.<sup>5</sup> “By it,” says Brissot, “they learnt to know Fox, Burke,

<sup>1</sup> Letter CCLXV.

<sup>2</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 196.

<sup>3</sup> Brissot, *Mémoires*, Vol. I. p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Romilly, *Mémoires*, Vol. I. p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 221 and 269.

North, whose speeches they repeated. . . . Every one was astonished that George allowed himself to be so insulted by them. 'What! no *lettres de cachet*! no Bastille! That's where the people are King,' men said."<sup>1</sup> Suard, the famous speeches of the Parliamentary leaders in his hand, used to translate the masterpieces aloud,<sup>2</sup> and from the English example sprang the licence of the Press that astonished all who had known France before 1786. "The almost unrestrained introduction of our daily publications," writes Hailes on October 25 of that year, "having attracted the attention of the people more towards the freedom and advantages of our constitution, has also infused into them a spirit of discussion of public matters which did not exist before."<sup>3</sup> What was published in the daily prints speedily became the talk of both coffee-house and drawing-room,<sup>4</sup> and thus "one would think one heard in more than one gilded *salon* the deliberations of a nascent colony on the government it will set up in the midst of the deserts."<sup>5</sup>

## § 2. *The Relations of the Rockingham Whigs with France*

Of all the English parties, the Whigs were, from their principles and political position, those most likely to accord with the growing liberalism of the French mind. The fervent supporters of the House of Hanover and of the established constitution, an unbroken enjoyment of office under the first two Georges, had destroyed the individualism of the party, and degraded the purity of their sentiments. With the accession of Lord Rockingham to office in 1765 the Whig party found itself once more under the leadership of a man whose integrity was unquestioned, and the events of the succeeding years not only strengthened the bond of

<sup>1</sup> Brissot, *Mémoires*, Vol. I. p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> *Dispatches from Paris*, 1786-1789, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> Dorset to Carmarthen, Nov. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 198.

union, but left them as the sole representatives of honesty in English politics. The new school of Whigs revives in all their freshness the principles that men had long learnt to identify with Whiggism, friendship to liberty, hostility to prerogative, love of toleration. So strong had been the association of the idea of Whiggism with a love of liberty that Bolingbroke had been *denounced* as a Tory in the *salons* of Paris in the first warmth of their budding theories.<sup>1</sup> In America the names of Whig and Tory were freely applied to the Republicans and Royalists respectively: "Though I thought that every man here," writes La Fayette in disappointment from America, "loved liberty, I find Toryism as openly professed as Whiggism."<sup>2</sup> We find in the Whigs of this time the same earnest desire for the good of humanity that marks the philosophers of France: it is a striking parallelism between Shelburne's desire to talk with Franklin on the means of promoting the happiness of mankind<sup>3</sup> and Montesquieu's dictum, "I invite you to be useful to mankind as the greatest happiness in the life of a man."<sup>4</sup> The Whigs had always been regarded as friends of toleration: some had been Deists or professed Latitudinarians;<sup>5</sup> the French philosophers, who openly admitted their indebtedness to the English Deistic school of thought, merely outstripped their masters. When Toryism in England became synonymous with servility to the Court, and fashion in France authorised philosophy as essential to *savoir faire*, the similarity of principles led the admirers of English practice into enmity to the French Court. Lastly, it was the Whigs who deeply interested themselves in the liberation of the blacks, the "hobby horse" of La Fayette and the favourite dream of Montesquieu, Diderot, Raynal and Suard.

That the advanced party in France in these early years

<sup>1</sup> Garat, Vol. II. p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> La Fayette, *Memoirs*, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Shelburne*, Vol. III. p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> Hume, *Essay on Superstition and Enthusiasm*.

took the Whig party as their model, either consciously or unconsciously, can admit of little doubt. "He is Chief of the Opposition," writes Mlle. de l'Espinasse, the mistress of that house to which the philosophers went to draw their opinions and beliefs, in describing Shelburne, "*that is why I like and esteem him.*" "Weak and unhappy as I am, if I had to be born again, I would rather be the least member of the House of Commons than the King of Prussia: it is only the glory of Voltaire that can console me for not being born an Englishman."<sup>1</sup> The closest ties of intimacy knit Shelburne, Barré, Conway, Richmond, Fox and other members of the Government of 1782 with the aristocracy and philosophers of France. Among the distinguished strangers whom he had seen at Holbach's, Morellet quotes the names of Shelburne, Barré and Wilkes. At Geoffrin's, Du Deffand's, Helvetius' and Trudaine's Shelburne mingled with the flower of the French intellect, and himself admits that his friendship with Morellet was the turning-point of his career.<sup>2</sup>

Mirabeau<sup>3</sup> and Morellet<sup>4</sup> visited him at Bowood; his protection of Priestley brought him into touch with the leaders of French science;<sup>5</sup> and his connections in France were so numerous that Payne wrote to Washington in 1789, "I believe he would be a good minister for England with respect to a better agreement with France."<sup>6</sup> Burke visited France in 1773;<sup>7</sup> Mme. du Deffand's comment on this visit, "He will leave pleased with our nation," but emphasises the statement in the Preface to *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority* that he was courted and caressed by the literary men of Paris. Fox visited Necker and Mme.

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Mlle. de l'Espinasse, Nov. 7, 1774.

<sup>2</sup> Life of Shelburne, Vol. II. p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> Fitzmaurice, Vol. III. p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> Memoirs, Vol. I. chap. ix.

<sup>5</sup> Priestley was able to give both Young and Rigby a letter to Lavoisier (Tours, Vol. I. p. 62, and Rigby, p. 23). Shelburne's friendships were great among all sections. Thus Young met M. Epivents, a merchant who had stayed at Bowood. His son, Lord Wycombe, was a great friend of Mme. de Flahaut.

<sup>6</sup> Jefferson, Vol. II. p. 467.

<sup>7</sup> Mme. du Deffand, Feb. 17, 1773.

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Geoffrin's, and mixed with those of the nobility who, like Lauzun and Chartres, were afterwards on the popular side; when Lauzun dined at Lord Carmarthen's, it was noticed that he talked to Fox all the time.<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Richmond, the lover of Mme. de Cambis, was a frequent visitor, on account of his estates in France, and known to all the Court. Of Walpole, of Wilkes, of General Conway, of Fitzpatrick and other prominent Whigs of the time the same may readily be said. Representative of the popular side in English politics, they guided the *salons* to the discussion of those political conceptions which were to them but "evening illuminations, drawing-room fireworks, Bengal lights to be played with and flung laughingly through the windows, where the casual passer-by might pick them up."

### § 3. *The Scotch School and the Economists*

Of all the precursors of the Revolution, the Economists seem to Tocqueville to breathe its spirit most nearly: the institutions which the Revolution was to abolish without return, the restrictions on the free trade in grain, the *jurandes* and *maîtrises*, the *corvées* and all that depressed the agricultural development of France was the particular object of their attack—all that can pass for its own work was predicted beforehand by them.<sup>2</sup> They have the true Socialistic spirit, which they communicate to the society of their day. Women boasted that they had adopted Turgot's principles and extolled them.<sup>3</sup> All became Economist or anti-Economist,<sup>4</sup> and the "net product" was daily the subject of discussion in the *salons*. They were the means,

<sup>1</sup> *Auckland Correspondence*, Vol. I. p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> See Tocqueville: "One recognises in their work that democratic and revolutionary tendency one knows so well" (p. 234).

<sup>3</sup> Mlle. de l'Espinasse was a great admirer of Turgot (*Letters of Mlle. de l'Espinasse*). Comp. "Extolled to the clouds by men of letters, by women who boasted of having adopted his principles, Turgot became chief of the Economists" (Besenval, Vol. II. p. 115).

<sup>4</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 304. Suard said, "My wife will never have an opinion on the net product which she hears of so learnedly and pertinently every day."

says Dean Stephens, of bringing before the public mind the miserable condition of agriculture and of the agricultural classes.<sup>1</sup> While others meditated a destructive policy, the Economists alone had a definite constructive plan to propose. In Quesnay's eyes all commerce should be free, all industry unfettered, and the only tax should be one on the net produce of land.<sup>2</sup> Turgot, the practical man of the sect, showed his adherence to the views of his leader during his intendency at Limoges by his reform of the *corvée*, by his institution of the Royal Society of Agriculture of Limoges, and by his introduction of the potato, the clover, and other agricultural improvements. His main argument in his memorial "On Tolerance" was that the Church was not a temporal power.<sup>3</sup> He issued an edict against *jurandes*, he undertook the construction of canals, and established free trade in grain, and Monsieur paid an unsuspecting tribute to the progressive nature of his views in that attack on him in which he described the genius of England as wishing to degrade the French by altering their established system of laws.<sup>4</sup> For no prominent group of thinkers had more connections in England, or were more disposed to adopt the customs they saw there, than the Economists. Gournay, with Quesnay, the originator of the Physiocrats, had read Petty, Davenant, Gee and Child, and had translated into French King's *British Merchant*, Child's *On the Interest of Money*, and Gee *On the Causes of Commercial Decline*.<sup>5</sup> Mme. Condorcet translated Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*; Turgot's early work was a translation of Hume's *Jealousy of Trade* and of some of Tucker's works; and it is hardly credible that he was unaware of Tucker's remarks on the advantages and disadvantages of trade in England and France, or of Bridgewater's achievements, when he

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Brougham, *Lives of the Philosophers* (Adam Smith). See Stephens, Turgot, pp. 63 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Stephens, Turgot.

<sup>4</sup> Stephens, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Morellet, l. p. 56. See also Turgot's *Eloge of Gournay*, Stephens, p. 242.

constituted d'Alembert, Bossut and Condorcet into a committee to project a scheme for the construction of canals in France.<sup>1</sup> Again, the English militia was a characteristic feature of the military system. It was one of Mirabeau's designs to introduce it into France; and yet Turgot in Limoges had preceded him in the endeavour. His attitude on billeting suggests the *Petition of Rights*, which would be well known to a friend and reader of Hume; at any rate, he can hardly have been ignorant of the discussion in 1765 on Grenville's plan of billeting soldiers on private houses in America. Nor were their personal relationships with English thinkers, and particularly with the Scotch school that included Hume, Adam Smith and Dugald Stewart, less remarkable than their admiration for English doctrines. Turgot met Adam Smith in 1766 at Holbach's,<sup>2</sup> when the great English Economist was travelling as tutor to the Duke of Buccleuch.<sup>3</sup> In the following year he published his *Réflexions sur la formation et distribution des Richesses*, in which were found the germs of many of the views afterwards put forward in the *Wealth of Nations*.<sup>4</sup> Of this Dugald Stewart writes: "The connection between some of these doctrines and the distinguishing tenets of the French Economists, and the intimacy in which he lived with some of the leaders of that sect, could not fail to assist him in methodising and digesting his views." What is applicable to Adam Smith is equally applicable to Turgot; and there can be little doubt that many views expressed both in the *Réflexions* and the *Wealth of Nations* were thrashed out in conversation on this memorable visit. After his retirement Turgot corresponded with Adam Smith on Economics, with Dr. Price on the Constitution of the United States, and with Benjamin Franklin,<sup>5</sup> whose views on the Free Export of Grain had already (1766) been

<sup>1</sup> Stephens, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60, and *Letters of Eminent Persons to Hume. Letter of Turgot*, p. 131. Higgs says, "at Quesnay's."

<sup>3</sup> Burton's *Life of Hume*.

<sup>4</sup> Stephens, *Turgot*, pp. 60 seq.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

copied in the *Ephémérides du Citoyen*.<sup>1</sup> He became personally acquainted with Hume, and many of the letters quoted by Burton are devoted to an exposition of his views on the exclusive nature of land for fiscal purposes, with which Hume is not disposed to agree. It is evidence in favour of his interest in agriculture that he obtained from Tucker particulars on the production of cereals in England.<sup>2</sup>

Morellet visited England at the expense of the Caisse de Commerce. He saw Tucker at Gloucester and the manufacturers of Birmingham. He obtained specimens of the cloth, woollen, silk and cotton manufactures of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, even inquiring into the methods of making haystacks the measures of weight, length and volume, and a knife for cutting hay. He visited Plymouth, Bristol, Dorchester, York and many seats of manufacture.<sup>3</sup>

He was an acquaintance of Adam Smith and a correspondent of Hume, as nearly all the philosophic group were. He sent copies of the prospectus of his commercial dictionary to Conway, Smith, Tucker, Robertson and Franklin, for the last of whom he appears to have had a great admiration.<sup>4</sup>

The Marquis of Mirabeau *père* is among the correspondents of Hume.<sup>5</sup> Mme. Condorcet also translated Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Moreover, Hume, Adam Smith, and Dugald Stewart were all men who had mingled in the salons of Mme. Geoffrin and d'Holbach with the great thinkers of France,<sup>6</sup> and there can be little doubt that the principles of the Economists were not only based on the works of Tucker and Hume, but received their ultimate form as a result both of personal intercourse with the Economic writers, and of personal acquaintance with many of the agricultural and political conditions of England.

<sup>1</sup> Franklin's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> Stephens, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. I. chap. ix., which contains a more detailed account of a foreigner's visit to England than any other I have seen.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. I.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Eminent Persons to Hume*.

<sup>6</sup> Garat, Vol. II. pp. 176 seq.

## § 4. Religion

The religious question is inseparable from the political; it is the vital point in the movement of the century in France. "By what right may I not do what I like, or write what I think? By what right am I forced to accept the Bull Unigenitus, or am I subject to *lettres de cachet*?" These were the personal problems that every thinking man in France was endeavouring to solve for himself in the midst of factious ecclesiastical tyranny wielded by dissolute abbés or still more dissolute bishops, just as the English had endeavoured to solve them a hundred years before. They found the answer most attuned to their desires in the works in which Hobbes and Locke, Tindal and Toland and Clarke, Bolingbroke and Hume had overthrown the theory of the Divine right of kings and justified the Revolution; in which, by appealing to the lights of reason, they had set up the cult of a God "that reigned but did not govern,"<sup>1</sup> and had infected the governing classes with a simple Deism, of which perhaps the most marked characteristic was its broad and tolerant nature. All parties in Bolingbroke's day agreed on the necessity of preserving the Established Church; the age of Walpole was an age of political torpor, the principle of *laissez-faire* its lodestar, and innovation its bugbear. Men's private faiths belied their public professions, and clergy of strongly Deistic views retained their ecclesiastical preferments. It was little wonder that a man of Voltaire's stamp, like others after him,<sup>2</sup> was impressed with the tolerance he saw around him in England, as he compared it with the arbitrary repression of all liberal thought and the persecuting zeal of the Molinists in France. His attack on the Church is the attack of the English Deistic School; for in his youth he had freely conversed with

<sup>1</sup> Morley, *Voltaire*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Grosley: "I with the utmost astonishment saw constant proofs of the mutual toleration which there prevails." Compare Achille du Châtelet, *infra*.

Bolingbroke and Clarke; and in the cunning hands of Diderot and d'Alembert, the merciless logic of the French intellect dismissed the *fainéant* deity that Voltaire had set up, only to found morality on reason.

"I sought with ardour," says Brissot of his younger years, "books for and against Christianity and devoured them. The trial was soon decided in my mind; but several years elapsed before I could entirely eradicate prejudice; the pride, insolence, and despotism of the priests irritated my vanity and independence."<sup>1</sup> The mental process here depicted was one that was common to all the attackers of the Christian Faith. By 1763 atheism had spread to an alarming extent in French Society: where philosophy became the rage, incredulity, became, as Lanfrey says, "a sort of varnish of *bon ton*, the necessary complement of a gentleman's bearing."<sup>2</sup> The attack of Diderot in its vehemence carried everything before it. "You English," he said to Romilly, "mix philosophy and theology; *il faut sabrer la théologie*."<sup>3</sup> Young children of six or seven affected incredulity; the philosophers boasted of their disbelief; Hume's moderate Deism was derided at the table of d'Holbach.<sup>4</sup> "The religion of the higher ranks," wrote Young in 1769, "is *universally* Deism; but the excessive luxury of the capital has given such power to sensuality that even Deism, it is thought, will give place to the more enticing doctrines, or rather no doctrine, of materialism, which, I am well informed, has of late made surprising advances."<sup>5</sup> It was not only the learned authors of the encyclopædic school that welcomed Hume—that conferred

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires*, Vol. I. pp. 50 and 51.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. XI.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires of Romilly*, Vol. I. p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Romilly's story is quoted by Burton. "As for atheists," said Hume, when dining at d'Holbach's, "I don't believe they exist." "You're a trifle unfortunate," replied his host, "you're now at table for the first time with seventeen."

<sup>5</sup> *Letters on the French Nation*, Letter VI. He says again (*Autobiography*, p. 123), "Among all the men I met with in France attached to the higher classes, or constituting them, all were infidels." "Don't let her make an infidel or a Frenchwoman of you," writes Mrs. Chapone à propos of Lady Mary Hervey (*Life*, Vol. II. p. 167).

on him, as he himself says, "the most extraordinary honours." No lady's toilet was complete without him:<sup>1</sup> Mme. de Choiseul, Mme. de Pompadour, and even the Dauphin's children were schooled to pay him idle compliments; the Duchesses de la Valière and de Lauzun, la Maréchale de Luxembourg and Mme. de Boufflers were his warm friends; Diderot, Morellet, Buffon, de Brosses, Turgot, Helvetius, Malesherbes, d'Alembert were among his correspondents;<sup>2</sup> and the reason of this popularity of a man with *larges joues Bernardines* and a round and smiling face,<sup>3</sup> who neglected *l'usage du monde*,<sup>4</sup> and committed absurdities in the best Society,<sup>5</sup> was not his personal charm, but the vogue of a new and alluring scepticism, of the great trinity of which he was the last.<sup>6</sup> From the higher ranks it spread through the social organism. The sunless lives of the peasantry, sinking under a load of selfish oppression and misery, made the idea of a God almost a mockery to them. Entering, as Tocqueville says, by strange paths and devious ways, the infidelity of the rich took in these strange places still stranger forms."<sup>7</sup> An anecdote preserved by Gouverneur Morris may shed some light on these "devious ways." On a visit to the Duc d'Orleans' château of Raincy he attended Mass. M. de Ségur and M. de Cubières amused the company by tricks with a candle which is put into the pockets of various gentlemen and lighted whilst they are otherwise engaged. "Immoderate laughter is the consequence"; and he adds, "This scene must be edifying to the domestics who are opposite and the villagers who worship below."<sup>8</sup> "I dined to-day," wrote Walpole, "with a dozen *savants*, and though all the servants were waiting, the conversation was more unrestrained, even on the Old Testament, than I would suffer at my own table if a single footman was present."<sup>9</sup> It was, indeed, the very frankness of their atheism that finally

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Charlemont.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Mme. du Deffand*, 1777.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. XII. p. 197.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Montagu, Sept. 22, 1765.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Hume.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>6</sup> Morley.

<sup>8</sup> *Diary*, Vol. I. p. 99.

destroyed the religion of France, just as it was the obvious bigotry of the *dévots* that prepared the way.

The logical conclusion though it was of the writings of the English Deists, their doctrines had not been pushed to this extreme in the land of their birth. The English intellect has always—perhaps from its greater practice in affairs—refrained from enforcing the theoretical speculations of its philosophers in their entirety, and irreligion gained no ground, except among a few advanced thinkers. Gibbon, like Diderot and Voltaire, glorified the Apostate Julian. His views were abhorred by all true followers of the Church, and yet he could not approve the intolerant zeal of the philosophers who “damned all believers with ridicule and contempt.”<sup>1</sup> Walpole, scanty though his religious beliefs were, sneeringly refers to d’Holbach’s pigeon-house full of atheists.<sup>2</sup> Priestley objected that all the philosophical persons to whom he was introduced at Paris were “disbelievers in Christianity and even professed atheists.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, though many among the upper classes were careless about their religious views, there was little conscientious infidelity, but merely an affectation of French *ton*. Although Diderot wrote in 1765, “Deists are innumerable there,”<sup>4</sup> yet the lectures of David Williams eleven years later at his chapel in Margaret Street could attract an audience of only a dozen people.<sup>5</sup> Diderot admits that “there are hardly any atheists, and those there are hide themselves,” but it would seem that Deism had, at the time of the Revolution, scarcely more hold than atheism. On the other hand, Whitefield’s sermons in the Countess of Huntingdon’s chapel were listened to by a large and distinguished congregation;<sup>6</sup> and although doubtless many

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*. Cf. “Gibbon is considered as an atheist, but what is Gibbon compared to Helvetius, to Freret, and to Voltaire?” (Brissot). ✓

<sup>2</sup> Jesse, *Selwyn*.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*.

<sup>4</sup> *Lettres à Mlle. Voland*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, Art. “Williams (David).”

<sup>6</sup> Among those mentioned in Vol. I., p. 478, of the *Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon* are Lords Camden, Northington, Chatham, Rockingham and the Duke of Bedford.

attended more from curiosity than conviction, others who came to scoff remained to pray. The mass of the people were moral and religious; it is the glory of Wesley and Whitefield that they saved the religion of the nation, and thus enabled it to resist unmoved the flood of revolutionary doctrines. For Whitefield was to England what Rousseau was to France, the one man who appealed to the emotional side of the masses; while Wesley is its Voltaire, the calculating organiser of a vast national movement. But whereas Rousseau was a Deist of the school of Clarke, exerting his influence on the side of scepticism, Whitefield utilised the resources which the new sentimental movement placed within the reach of a fervid enthusiast all on the side of religion. While Voltaire devoted his energies to the destruction of the Church, Wesley's wide influence in England was exerted on its behalf rather than against. The *dévo*t and the revolutionary movements in France were in two totally distinct camps: the *personnel* of the religious and revolutionary movements in England is inextricably intermingled. Priestley was a sympathiser with the Revolution, yet Priestley was fervently religious; Walpole was a sceptic, but he had no sympathy with revolutionary tenets. In France, however, the Revolutionists were almost universally irreligious, or at most held some form of Deism. The Société des Amis des Noirs consisted almost entirely of men devoted to the constitutional changes, yet when they undertook the translation of Clarkson's *Essay on the Commerce of the Human Kind*, appeals based on the ground of religion were ruthlessly elided.<sup>1</sup>

It would hardly be expected, on the face of it, that with differences such as these subsisting between the two societies, the Anglomania did much to confirm the atheistic tenets so common in France. In fact, Dumont records that Achille du Châtelet, seeing in England "a less prejudiced religion, had returned from the prejudices he had borrowed." But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that many

<sup>1</sup> Brissot's *Mémoires*, Vol. III. p. 4.

members of English Society affected scepticism, and that, to quote Arthur Young, many English clergy spent the morning scampering after fox-hounds and reeled from inebriety to the pulpit.<sup>1</sup> To more casual observers this might mask the moral reform which the Evangelical revival was already effecting. Moreover, we have seen that the French had made up their minds that the English were a nation of mental depth, and to them the arguments against religion had assumed such a convincing form that they could not conceive of any thinking man accepting the Christian faith. "Because the liberty of thinking there (England) is unlimited, we," says Brissot, "peopled it with atheists, deists and philosophers."<sup>2</sup> They failed to realise that the most cogent arguments in their own eyes had been the pride and tyranny of a privileged priesthood, the higher dignitaries of which were drawn exclusively from the upper strata of Society, and that to suffer persecution is, after all, the surest method of gaining proselytes. If the English Government had imprisoned Hume, instead of making him Secretary of the Embassy at Paris, his deistic views might have had as many converts as the political views of the scapegrace Wilkes actually obtained, or as wide a vogue as Jansenism. Forgetting this, Frenchmen associated in the closest ties of intimacy with English Society, and yet failed to appreciate the religious revival which in days of storm and stress was to prove its salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Young, *Journeys in France*, Vol. I. p. 543.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires*, Vol. II. p. 262. Perhaps this is not surprising when we remember that Montesquieu made the same comment: "There is no religion in England; . . . if one speaks of religion every one laughs."

## CHAPTER VI

### SENTIMENTALISM

#### § 1. *The Return to Nature*

AMONG the characteristics of the latter half of the century is to be found one that must arrest attention, both from the widespread influence it exerted, and the bizarre figure of its principal literary exponent, Rousseau. From the time of the publication of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 1759, the fashion authorised a new affectation, reverie, softenings, that men had not known before. "It is a question," says Taine, "of returning to Nature."<sup>1</sup> In the case of Rousseau himself it was no affectation, but the instinct of the man whose chief delight was in the "fine scenery and sunny gardens" of Les Charmettes. The effect of his writings, however, was strengthened by the English influence :<sup>2</sup> the land where great nobles retired to their country estates, where the wilder beauties of Nature had not been superseded by stiff *parterres* and rigid lines, where natural instincts were not crushed by the overpowering mastery of fashion, and where mothers suckled and tended their own children, became known to all French Society at the very moment at which the golden tongue of Rousseau was pleading for these very things.<sup>3</sup> When he was employing the poetry of his prose

<sup>1</sup> P. 208.

<sup>2</sup> For the *contrat social* see Garat, *loc. cit.*, Chap. IV. Section 1 of thesis. Also compare Young, *infra*, and Morley, *Diderot*, Vol. II. pp. 25-7. The *Lettre à D'Alembert*, with its exaggerated eulogy of Republican Geneva, must have done much to attract attention in England.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. Garat: "Tronchin made the women walk, Rousseau nurse their children."

The *Letters* of Lady Sarah Lennox show us a picture of an English Society mother.

Also compare Walpole on Lady Churton. Although it is probable that the mention of this case and that of the Duchess of Devonshire

in vivid pictures of Nature's scenery, there was growing up in England a school of poets, who from Thomson, Young and Macpherson worshipped in English verse the goddess who had been all unknown to the age of Pope and Dryden. While the *Gazette Littéraire* was introducing the passionate imagery of Ossian, the fertile reflection of Young, and the native simplicity of Gray's *Elegy* to Parisian readers, Rousseau was showing the dawn to "people who never rose till mid-day, the countryside to eyes that had never rested but on *salons* and palaces, the natural garden to men who had never walked but between shaven hedges and straight borders."<sup>1</sup> So inextricably is the English influence mixed up in the minds of his contemporaries with the growing passion for country scenes, that his own share in it was hardly realised even by them. "He borrowed from the English," says a writer in the *Mercure Français*, "the idea of approaching and painting Nature. He preferred to those high walks where the scissors incessantly shear the budding boughs, where the gravelled paths suggest a barren soil, where the monotonous grouping of the *quincunx* wearies the eye, where here and there rise streams of water losing themselves in peaceful basins, and where cold statues covered with moss are to be seen, he preferred, I say, beautiful views, Nature and variety, uneven but attractive."<sup>2</sup> This passage in itself marks a new note in French literature, just as the delicate fancy of the Prince de Ligne or of Mme. de Sabran strikes a fresh chord in the epistolary efforts of the fashionable classes.<sup>3</sup> In the white linen levettes and the beribboned straw hat of Marie Antoinette and the

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(*Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, Vol. II. p. 36) would suggest that the practice was not too common in England, we have the positive testimony of Andrews: "Few of these (French ladies) are willing to undergo the labour of suckling their children, in comparison with the number of English women whose circumstances, if they chose it, might exempt them from this trouble" (*French and English Ladies*).

<sup>1</sup> Taine, Book IV. Chap. I. p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Esprit du Mercure Français*, Vol. III. p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Lescure has given an exhaustive account of the correspondence of these two members of French Society (*Rivarol*).

Court,<sup>1</sup> in the dainty elegance of the flower-patterned walls of the *salons*,<sup>2</sup> in the elaborate head-gear representing a whole landscape,<sup>3</sup> even in the clock made by Gouthière for the municipality of Lyons, with its river, its rockery, its god and its nymph,<sup>4</sup> are to be found the evidence of that same tendency that drove fashionable Paris to spend six months in the country, and covered France with the English gardens. The state of Nature becomes ideal, and it is doubtful if, without the English influence, that of Rousseau would have been so strong, or if without that of Rousseau the English would have acquired the supremacy it did attain. Together they effected in French Society a change which, while degrading it from its former exclusiveness, yet supplied it with no substitute that would enable it to resist or guide the Revolution.

### § 2. *Richardson and Sterne*

It is in three principal respects that the English influence coincided with the tenets of the school which Rousseau founded, and the first of these was a passion for the tale of private life. An interest in such works—at any rate the consuming interest taken by French Society—was the index of changed conditions; the aristocratic spirit which took its birth in the feudal organisation of Western Europe must disappear before the doings of the average man or woman can excite interest, or their recital provide amusement. “A passion for Richardson,” says Morley, “was a symbol that man was truly possessed of the spirit of Political Revolution—of the transformation from feudalism to industrial democracy.”<sup>5</sup> Now of the existence among all classes of this passion for Richardson there can be no doubt.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, Vol. II. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Dilke, *French Furniture*. Representations of flowers were universally popular. “Il n’y a pas de luxe d’ornement que le genre des fleurs n’admette : étant elles-mêmes le plus grand luxe de la nature.”

<sup>3</sup> Compare Maugras, *Lauzun*.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Dilke, p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> *Diderot*, Vol. II. p. 25.

*Clarissa Harlowe* is the obvious model of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*;<sup>1</sup> Diderot exulted in it, witness his *éloge* of its author, "O Richardson, Richardson, unique among men, thou shalt be my favourite all the day long."<sup>2</sup> In 1767 Walpole laughingly remarks that he had told the French they had adopted "the two dullest things we had—Whisk and Richardson."<sup>3</sup> Mme. Riccoboni publicly announces her intention of writing *dans le gout de Marivaux*,<sup>4</sup> and crowns her novels with English titles such as *The Story of Miss Jenny Revel*. Garat speaks of the numerous masterpieces of this kind that the English have produced;<sup>5</sup> and even the crabbed old Friend of Man regrets his ignorance of English, in that he was unable to read the works of "the worthiest of men," Richardson.<sup>6</sup> Mme. de Genlis travelled from London to Llangollen to see a model of perfect friendship, called her young English girl Pamela, and could not leave London without going to see Richardson's picture; Mme. de Tessé prostrated herself on his tomb, uttering groans and tears. When Sterne visited Paris in 1762 he found *Tristram Shandy* as well known there as in London. He amused the wits by his piquant originality and, says Garat, "gave new emotions to sympathetic minds by the promptest and most touching sensibility."<sup>7</sup> No author, perhaps, was so calculated to minister to the growing tendencies of Paris as he who mingled his laughter and his tears on the same page, and whose power of pathos appealed to the new emotions that the age was bringing forth. "I have converted many unto Shandeism," he writes, "for be it known I Shandy it away fifty times more than I was wont. 'Qui le diable est cet homme là,' said Choiseul the other day, 'ce chevalier Shandy.'" <sup>8</sup> He tells us of the many civilities he met with, and it is evident from his letters that he established himself on very friendly terms at Hol-

<sup>1</sup> *Diderot*, Vol. II. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, VII. 136.  
<sup>4</sup> Garat, Vol. I. pp. 122-4. She was quite a fluent English scholar.  
 See *Letters to Hume*, p. 304.

<sup>5</sup> Garat, *loc. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Vol. II. p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters to Hume*, Aug. 2, 1763.

<sup>8</sup> *Letters of Sterne to Garrick*, 1762.

bach's.<sup>1</sup> If Mme. Riccoboni found her literary opportunity in imitating Richardson, equally so did Diderot in *Jacques le fataliste*, and Mlle. de l'Espinasse in her *Promenade à l'Hôtel des Invalides et à l'école militaire*, imitate Sterne.<sup>2</sup> Already he had established a school in France, but it was reserved for revolutionary times to find the delicate allusions of Sterne's romances eminently suited to that suspicious age, and in 1792 *Ann' Quin Bredouille, ou le Petit cousin de Tristram Shandy* was published—a story of a people in revolution, where Uncle Bredouille, supported by allegorical reason and self-love, satirised the sights his native country yielded.<sup>3</sup>

Nor was it only through the medium of Richardson and Sterne that French Society indulged its love for the sentimental. Le Tourneur in 1769, and Colardeau in 1770, translated Young's *Night Thoughts*. Mme. Riccoboni writes to Garrick that the translation has made a fortune; "an unquestionable proof," she adds, "of the changed spirit of the French."<sup>4</sup> Young becomes in the eyes of French Society the model of that melancholy it was beginning to assume. "Here I am, lost in the dead and the tombs like poor Young," writes Mme. de Sabran. "I am not so sad as he, but I am a little. There are those shadowy days when everything looks black despite my natural gaiety."<sup>5</sup> Le Tourneur found the enthusiasm for English poetry so remunerative that he followed up his first translation with the *Lives of Savage and Thomson*. *The Seasons* was translated in 1759, and Macpherson's *Ossian* in 1777, while Percy's *Reliques* also became a favourite book in France. Everything sentimental became the rage, from Crèvecoeur's *Letters of an American Farmer* to the *larmoyante* Comedies of Diderot, Monvel and Beaumarchais, but of all this sensibility the popularity of Richardson's works had supplied

<sup>1</sup> Morellet includes him among the visitors at Holbach's, and there are messages sent to the Baron in Sterne's *Letters*.

<sup>2</sup> Garat, Vol. I. p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Goncourt, Chap. VIII.

<sup>4</sup> *Garrick Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 566.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters* of Mme. de Sabran, p. 18.

the incentive, and it is the work of Pope, Addison, Gray and Macpherson, as well as his, that Rousseau takes up and continues in France.<sup>1</sup>

### § 3. *The Return to the Country*

Much has been written on the peculiar tendency of the French nobles to neglect their provincial estates, a tendency that to a great extent accounts for the overwhelming influence of Paris in directing and promoting the revolution itself. But the writings of Rousseau and the example of their English fellows had done much before 1789 to induce a return to the country; Mme. du Deffand's later letters contain many complaints of the emptiness of Paris at certain times of the year. Even as early as 1771 Walpole remarks that the time of year (July) disculpates him from the scandalous surmise of going to enjoy himself.<sup>2</sup> The Queen delights to throw off the cares of royalty in the Little Trianon, while the King's passion for hunting equally attracted him to rural pursuits. The habit of country life soon rendered Paris distasteful, with its narrow, muddy streets, its rattling carts, the wild appearance of the vulgar and the street-walkers<sup>3</sup>—a dirty town on a dirtier ditch, as Walpole called it. French aristocracy had been led to appreciate something infinitely more beautiful, and with its wonted adaptability<sup>4</sup> had learnt to talk of the freshness of the twilight or the sight of the sunrise, and to see in the languishing end of a beautiful day the simile of the end of pleasure after a delightful evening. The Chevalier de l'Isle can see in a woman's tears one of those fine summer days when sometimes a little cloud falls in light rain without obscuring the brilliance of the sun. Mme. de Sabran can

<sup>1</sup> Petit de Julleville.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, Vol. VIII. p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Prince de Ligne, *Fragments relatifs aux mémoires*, p. 193. Dutens refers to the dirty state of Paris.

<sup>4</sup> A good deal of the taste for Nature seems to exhaust itself in catch-phrases, just as the scientific tendencies of the age were fostered by adroit conversationalists.

see in a shadowy day, when everything looks black, a time when her philosophy can make its reckoning. The letters of Mme. de Sabran, and those of the Prince de Ligne to Mme. de Coigny, contain innumerable passages which one could quote in proof of the assertion that French Society had copied the precepts of Diderot and Rousseau; it is unnecessary for the present purpose, since Arthur Young supplies us with the positive testimony of an acute observer on this point. "The mode of living and the pursuits approach much more to the habits of a nobleman's house in England than would commonly be imagined," he says of Liancour. "The present fashion of spending some time in the country is new; at this time of year (September 16), and for many weeks past, Paris is, comparatively speaking, empty. This remarkable revolution in the French manners is certainly one of the best customs they have taken from England, and its introduction was effected the easier because assisted by the magic of Rousseau's writings." The evident result of this return to the country was the diminution of the splendour of the Court at Versailles. It is difficult to say that this loss of brilliance was even partly responsible for the disloyalty that became conspicuous in the opposition to the monarchy,<sup>1</sup> and the ridicule that rained libels on the Queen;<sup>2</sup> but when the tradition that environed the Court with splendour had been once violated, its hold over the minds of men was gone. Besenval laments this decay: "Versailles was not long in falling from the brilliance it had maintained so long: men hurried from the obligation of presenting themselves there into an indecent solitude."<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, moreover, the Seigneur returned to his estate, and to closer touch with his dependents, often poor, and certainly never bearing any resemblance to the feudal noble of the past. The peasant saw in the absent master

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Mme. de Genlis: "It was become the fashion to defy the Court in everything, and to ridicule the monarchy" (Vol. III. p. 215).

<sup>2</sup> The Prince de Ligne (*Mémoires*, p. 68) refers to the libels which gave to the Queen for lovers, Conway, Lord Strativen and other English as foolish as he.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires*, Vol. III. p. 141.

for whose benefit he had been ground in misery and wretchedness, not the protector, not the warrior whose courage conferred additional lustre on their King, but sometimes a fop, sometimes a gambler or a spendthrift, always a "sensible soul" whom he despised for his artificialities, and who had lost in the trammels of an effete ultra-civilisation the manly vigour and strength of arm that had endeared the feudal magnate to his dependents. Sometimes it was no scion of an ancient house, but some newly-ennobled financier whose wealth, wrung from the pockets of the poor, had raised him to an eminence of which he was not worthy. "I see them start from Paris, these financiers to whom Providence has given magnificence. . . . This Priest of Plutus makes his entry into his village with the solemn ceremony of an Eastern Satrap. . . . 'All men are brothers,' the *parvenu* ought to say; 'let us render to humanity the tribute that is its due. Let us relieve misery.' How happy should I be to hear the Seigneur of a parish speak thus! Is it the great lord who comes and makes men wretched by passing through every one's corn in pursuit of a stag or a hare? <sup>1</sup> Is it a rich abbé who comes to the country with his niece to avoid the assembly of the clergy? Is it that Farmer-General of whom I have just spoken, who passes only ten days on his land to overturn all that is agreeable, and who shuts himself up with two or three friends whom he has brought from the capital to win his money at whist?" <sup>2</sup> . . . This is the picture of the return to the country, and its effect is to make the too heavy burdens unendurable. The degradation of the nobility, says Walpole, "pointed out the prey"; and in this remark it is the "pointing out" that is as essential as the "degradation," which was shown to all France only when the troop of *représentants*, the *sensible*, polished, literary, conversational amateurs, returned to their country seats;

<sup>1</sup> Like M. de Guéméné, who spent the summer hunting the stag with an equipage à l'Anglaise, as well as all his household, according to the manner of the time (Besenval, Vol. II. p. 273).

<sup>2</sup> Prince de Ligne, *Coup d'œil sur Belœil*, pp. 107-9.

rushing to the pursuit of pleasure, and in the new mad craze for hunting reviving the most galling of their feudal rights, the *capitaineries*.

#### § 4. *The English Garden*

The third aspect of the taste for Nature is to be found in the growing interest in gardens : a love of beauty in Nature and of the graceful flowers went hand-in-hand with the growing sympathies of Society ; it introduced a refining influence by appealing from the grossness of daily life to the higher sentiments, by imparting a real and vivifying passion to the workless idlers of the social hierarchy ; it is, in fact, the outward and visible sign of the moral improvement of these last few years. Rousseau's love of Nature instilled in him those lofty sentiments that constitute the glory of his writings, while totally at variance with the mad fits of erotic passion that make it a matter of astonishment that such a man should have been capable of such exalted ideas. "Lovers of gardens," cried the Prince de Ligne, "be lovers of humanity. It is in the fields that you will find means to exercise it."<sup>1</sup> In his eyes adherence to the shaven walks and carved trees meant adherence to ancient prejudices, and the disappearance of these symbols of the past from the parks of the great nobles meant the destruction of the ancient social system. "When the measure of the monks shall be at its height," he says again, "when the danger of some, and the uselessness of others, shall have been recognised, they will, by destroying the cloisters, destroy at the same blow prejudices in religion and in gardens."<sup>2</sup> The utter extinction of all relics of the feudal age—which, after all, was the essence of the Revolution—began with the gardens, and Society, with its burning Anglo-mania, readily adopted the natural garden as the one change

<sup>1</sup> *Coup d'œil sur Belœil*, p. 145. Compare "Qui fait aimer les champs, fait aimer la vertu," quoted by Lescure, *Rivarol*, p. 309, and Prince de Ligne, also quoted by him, "Pères de famille, inspirez la jardinomanie à vos enfants, ils en deviendront meilleurs."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

in the historic order of things that it could adopt without inconvenience, nay, even with pleasure, to itself. In the eyes of Frenchmen the English borrowed their models in gardening from wild and uncultivated woods :<sup>1</sup> "It is the English," says the Prince de Ligne, "who have been able to put to advantage those falls of water, those happy charms, those delightful horrors, those caverns, those ruins, those surprise views";<sup>2</sup> great masses of flowers heaped on the grass are due to them.<sup>3</sup> Voltaire claims for himself the priority in the introduction of the English style of garden into France. "It was I," he said to Sherlock, "who introduced that taste into France, and every one eagerly caught it."<sup>4</sup> Montesquieu also adopted it, and endeavoured to cultivate his villa in the English fashion,<sup>5</sup> but it seems to have been about 1771 that the popularity of the English garden really began, for Walpole, who early in that year expresses doubt as to a Frenchman's capacity for appreciating Nature's beauties,<sup>6</sup> was astonished, when he visited France later on, at the progress he found there. "When we were destroying in our pleasure grounds the straight walks and alleys, the symmetrical squares, the trees cut in circles and the uniform hedges, in order to transform them into English gardens, we were indicating our wish to resemble that nation in other and more essential points,"<sup>7</sup> says Ségur, and there can be no doubt that it was the increased familiarity with England that accounted for the numbers of English gardens that began to grow up about this time. The most famous was, perhaps, that of M. Watelet at the Moulin Joli. Walpole has left a description of M. Boutin's. For the greenness of the grass and the wisdom of the design the Prince de Ligne knows nothing better than Mme. de Boufflers' garden at the Temple,<sup>8</sup> while her other at Auteuil is "strictly English and begotten by her on an English

<sup>1</sup> Grosley, Vol. II. p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Coup d'œil sur Belœil*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> Letter XXIII.

<sup>5</sup> Churton Collins, *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England*, p. 173.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, Vol. VIII. pp. 37-40.

<sup>7</sup> *Mémoires*, Vol. I. pp. 130, 131. <sup>8</sup> *Coup d'œil sur Belœil*, p. 92.

gardener.”<sup>1</sup> There was a model of one at the King’s library; the Queen, who evinced a decided fancy for them, had one at Trianon, and the Prince de Condé’s at Chantilly was a favourite object for travellers to see; the Duc d’Harcourt’s was considered one of the finest in France; M. de Montesquieu at Maupertuis, Mme. de Guéménée at Montreuil, the Prince de Ligne at Bel-Oeil, the Duc de Bouillon at Navarre, the Duc de Liancourt at Liancourt, even the opera-singer Mlle. Dervieux, and innumerable others, gave France a host of English gardens, and supplied practical opportunities for the realisation of those visions of rural beauty which Rousseau had proclaimed.

### § 5. *The Philanthropic Movement*

The outburst of philanthropy that characterises the last few years of the old *régime*, and gives its best glory to these last few years, is intimately related to the return to Nature. For it was when the nobility returned to the country that they found in the impoverished peasantry the most deserving objects of their philanthropic zeal, and it was the new “Sensibility,” trained on tearful comedies and sentimental novels, that opened their eyes to the misery they saw around them. But of this movement, as of so many others in the century, Voltaire must be regarded as the pioneer, and it was in England that he learnt that cosmopolitan humanity and far-reaching tolerance that led him to the defence of a Calas or a Byng, no matter to what race he belonged. The sympathy of Diderot with the oppressed, the spirit expressed in his remark, “I flatter myself I am a citizen of that great town the world,”<sup>2</sup> became the characteristic of the encyclopædic school at large, and from them was adopted by their literary successors. “Philosophy, weary of seeing mankind always divided by political interests, rejoices now to see them, from one end of the world to the other, form themselves into a republic under the

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, IX. p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Hume*, p. 283.

leadership of one same tongue,"<sup>1</sup> and thus grows the spirit that found its ultimate expression in the decree of November 19, 1792. That sentiments of this kind would be fostered by the American War, and still more by the friendly attitude of the two societies towards each other, is quite evident, and the philanthropic tendency of the age in the two countries meets in many points, but in none perhaps so much as in the question of the abolition of the slave trade. Begun by the Quakers of North America, the agitation had obtained its first success in England by the judges' decision in the case of Somerset in 1772; it was earnestly urged by the French philosophers, and Brissot and Clavière were admitted into Granville Sharp's society formed for that purpose in 1787.<sup>2</sup> When Brissot returned to France he started the Société des Amis des Noirs,<sup>3</sup> of which La Fayette, who had in 1785 bought a plot of land in Cayenne to establish there a colony of liberated negroes,<sup>4</sup> was one of the original members. In 1789 it numbered a hundred or so men of letters, and received the approbation of Louis himself.<sup>5</sup> The members of this society were in communication with Romilly, Clarkson, Wilberforce, and the principal adherents of the cause in England, which by the support of Pitt and the passage of Sir William Dolbey's Bill to alleviate the horrors of the middle passage, seemed on the point of success at the outbreak of the Revolution.<sup>6</sup> There was, however, this difference between the advocates of Abolition in the two countries: while its supporters in England were the representatives of the Evangelical Reaction, and based their plea on the grounds of religion, in

<sup>1</sup> Rivarol, *Discours sur l'universalité de la langue française*.

<sup>2</sup> Brissot, *Mémoires*, Vol. II.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III.

<sup>4</sup> La Fayette, *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> Romilly, *Memoirs and Letters*, Vol. I. pp. 348-52.

<sup>6</sup> Thus Pitt writes of Necker's appointment: "One other consequence which is a good one will, I think, be that of improving our chance of settling something about the slave trade" (*Dropmore MSS.*, Aug. 29, 1788). Lansdowne writes to Morellet in the same year: "The majority of each town which profits by it are loud and enthusiastic for its abolition upon principles of morality, freedom and commercial honour" (*Fitzmaurice, Life of Shelburne*, Vol. III. p. 473).

France the movement is guided by conceptions of the natural rights of man.

In other and laudable schemes of philanthropy the visitors to England had learnt much. The improvement of the prisons which Howard effected impressed Mirabeau so much as to lead him to translate the letter in which Romilly had described his horror at the condition of the Hospital of la Salpêtrière and the prison of Bicêtre.<sup>1</sup> He also was induced to give the question of the hospitals of France his most earnest thought, and Coyer before him had been struck by those of London and its environs. Frenchmen contrasted the consequences to his relations of the crime of Lord Ferrers with that of the double disgrace of the Rohans, "dishonouring thousands for the guilt of one," and their pity went out to the innocent victims of another's offence, the question being one of the first to come before the National Assembly.<sup>2</sup> In the piece which was produced at the Comédie Française in 1790 with the same object in view, the sentiments which emphasised the point were put into the mouth of a *Lor' Anglais*, sufficient proof of the origin ascribed to them.<sup>3</sup> But it was in the exercise of private benevolence that the spirit of the age was most remarkable, when contrasted with the selfishness of the earlier part of the century, and many of the most philanthropic Frenchmen were those who had travelled and obtained a wider insight into the varying conditions of human life. Many acts of kindness were associated with the history of the Duke of Orleans and his Duchess;<sup>4</sup> the old Duke of Penthièvre and his daughter-in-law, the Princesse de Lamballe, were blessed by their peasantry; the Duc de Liancour founded a school for the poor sons of

<sup>1</sup> Dumont, p. 13, and Romilly, Vol. I. p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Coyer, p. 64. Clermont-Tonnerre read his speech on the subject to Gouverneur Morris, Vol. I. p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> Morris, *Diary*, Vol. I. p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of the Princesse de Lamballe*. Grace Elliott confirms this with respect to the Duke: "I never saw him nor heard him say an ill-natured thing to anybody till his head was turned by this horrid Revolution."

soldiers;<sup>1</sup> Sinclair describes the Duc de Charost as a "perfect philanthropist";<sup>2</sup> the Abbé de L'Epée was devoting his life to the instruction of deaf mutes, and Valentin Haüy to the care of the blind; the papers opened their columns to tales of distress, and public subscription was employed in the sadder cases, such as that of Jacques Droin, the old soldier of Auxerre;<sup>3</sup> women carried their "philosophical compassion to an extreme, as they carry everything."<sup>4</sup> "The winter has been uncommon," writes Huber to Eden, "and so have the acts of benevolence in this town. The French are a good people."<sup>5</sup> There was a general softening of the national character and a growth of sympathy with the poor and distressed, so that French Society in its new pose of philanthropists might deservedly justify Talleyrand's praise—"He who did not live before 1789 does not know the joy of life."

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de la Duc de la Rochefoucauld.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sinclair Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of the Princesse de Lamballe*, Vol. I. p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> *Besenal*, Vol. II. p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Huber to Eden, Jan. 16, 1789.

## CHAPTER VII

1789-1793

### § 1. *The Emigration*

WHEN the Revolution first began there was little to suggest that it would eventually degenerate into the scenes of anarchy that marked the years 1792 and 1793; even events such as the taking of the Bastille were regarded by most Englishmen as the necessary concomitants of a revolution, and caused no surprise in a country which had not long before witnessed the Gordon Riots. The effort of the French to secure a representative Government met with great sympathy at first among the English aristocracy, who had seen with their own eyes the abuses of the existing *régime*,<sup>1</sup> and the desire to follow the course of events was so great that the *Courrier de Provence* became quite a fashionable journal in England, Romilly telling us that among the subscribers he had seen the names of forty-five, including the first nobility.<sup>2</sup> The Peasants' Revolt, and the enthusiastic scene of August 4, following closely as they did upon the recall of Necker and the exile of the Polignacs, drove many of the more monarchical party into banishment. They swarm at the French Ambassador's,<sup>3</sup> and among them are several who have always maintained friendly relations with the English visitors—Mme. de Boufflers, Mme. de Cambis, the Duchesse de Biron, and others who establish themselves at Richmond. In fact, this place becomes a "petty France," so many of the emigrants settle there; Mme. de Boufflers on Richmond Hill, Mme. de Roncherolles at Petersham, President d'Alègre

<sup>1</sup> Romilly says that at first it excited general joy. Letter to Dumont, July 1789, Vol. I. p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 374.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIV. p. 188.

on Richmond Green, and the Comte de Suffren below the bridge.<sup>1</sup> Their arrival is welcomed by their English friends, who make *petits-soupers* for them, and take them to Newmarket and to stay in their country houses.<sup>2</sup> Opportunities for requiting past kindnesses are eagerly seized by Englishmen,<sup>3</sup> and many of the French, expecting their exile to be of short duration, prepared to enjoy the compulsory visit as much as they had previously enjoyed the voluntary one. From this time the emigration is more or less continuous, and as egress from France presented no difficulty at the time, many seized the excuse of a visit to England to escape from France. In August 1790, Walpole writes that "Paris is in such a ferment that swarms of French are flocking here." Early in 1791 the Ducs de Richelieu and de Duras and other of the principal nobles arrive; among others Mme. de Saint Priest, whose husband had retired in the previous November from the Ministry of the Interior. With the abortive flight of the King to Varennes, and his acceptance of the constitution, the Revolution enters on a new phase. The amnesty which was proclaimed attracted many of the emigrants back to France, and the decrees which were thundered by the Legislative against those that remained abroad left many of them in destitution, without the hope of return till the Duke of Brunswick should have effected the counter-Revolution. In these circumstances English Society threw all the sympathy of that philanthropic age into welcoming and raising subscriptions for the refugees who, in the closing months of 1792, flocked here from the scenes of anarchy which the massacre of the Swiss Guards had inaugurated. In September Dundas writes, "The influx of foreigners . . . is immense and daily increasing." It "surpasses any idea that could be formed of it."<sup>4</sup> Estimates were made,

<sup>1</sup> See *Castle Howard MSS.*, pp. 684-690. *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 370; Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XIV. p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> "Mme. de Roncherolles goes for a week to Lady Egremont's to-day" (*Castle Howard MSS.*, p. 684).

<sup>3</sup> Thus Burke requited the kindness of the Bishop of Auxerre to his son when the latter was in France to learn French.

<sup>4</sup> *Dropmore MSS.*, Sept. 12 and 14, 1792.

however. In October Pitt puts the number at five thousand;<sup>1</sup> in the following January Storer reckons that there are upwards of six thousand in London and its environs alone;<sup>2</sup> the violence with which the "*non-assermentés*" clergy were treated was responsible for the presence of over twelve hundred priests,<sup>3</sup> many of whom received Lord Sheffield's hospitality. Among these latest emigrants are some who played leading parts in the earlier stages of the Revolution. Noailles is here, announcing his intention to live under a form of government he had always admired;<sup>4</sup> Liancour, Chambonas, Malouet, Lally Tollendal, Rivarol, Cazalés, d'André, all have taken refuge from the dangers that surrounded them in Paris; at Juniper Hall is a colony of them, de Narbonne, d'Arblay, de Jaucourt, M. Girardin, son of Rousseau's patron, Talleyrand and Mme. de Staël; "the town swarms with these ex-members of the National Assembly." Deprived of their ordinary means of subsistence, they still continue as far as they can the enjoyments of their life in Paris, supporting themselves by giving lessons or selling needlework. Their English friends helped them by subscriptions,<sup>5</sup> by providing schools for their children,<sup>6</sup> and in a more delicate manner, by copious invitations. The Duke of Grafton invited Liancour to make Euston his home during his exile, promising him that he should be as free as in an *hôtel*; Lord Sheffield gave him a similar invitation, and Fanny Burney, who relates it, adds, "I believe both these gentlemen had been entertained at Liancour some years ago."<sup>7</sup> The Duke of Queensberry gives a concert, cards and supper every evening to the French colony at Richmond.<sup>8</sup> "I expect Mme. de Coigny here," writes Elliott; "she is literally starving, and this is the only way to help a gentle-

<sup>1</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 498, Storer to Auckland.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 448.

<sup>4</sup> Gower, *Dispatches*, p. 188.

<sup>5</sup> *Burke Corr.*, Vol. IV. p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Diary*, Vol. V. p. 356. See Lord Grafton's *Autobiography*, p. 19, for his early communications with the family.

<sup>8</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Dec. 18, 1792, Vol. II. p. 474.

woman.”<sup>1</sup> At Mme. de Flahaut’s, who fled after August 10, he found Lord Wycombe, and several other French and English, “crammed into a miserable lodging, where she sees company every evening as if she was at the Louvre.”<sup>2</sup> Their frivolity is remarkable. They speculate on the probability of the troubles extending themselves to England.<sup>3</sup> They are (in Holland, at least) “the noisiest and apparently the happiest of the company;”<sup>4</sup> at Coblenz the Princes are living in the same style of extravagance they had adopted at Versailles; the Duc de Bourbon declares that if they stop him hunting he will return to France and give himself to the nation.<sup>5</sup>

The emigrants are not the only visitors to England during this period; the Duc d’Orleans found it convenient to retire here in 1790—to be caressed by only a few *high in rank*.<sup>6</sup> At the close of the National Assembly in 1791 several of the constitution-makers passed over to England for a holiday, perhaps acting on the principle that they should do as English Members of Parliament had frequently done for the previous thirty years. Pétion, the first, was also the most notorious, and was well received. He was loaded, Dumont tells us, with invitations, to such an extent as to arouse the distrust of Government.<sup>7</sup> The Duc de Lévis, another legislator, was present at the debates of the House of Commons, but was coldly received at Court.<sup>8</sup> Talleyrand was dispatched on an unofficial mission to England in the hope of promoting a better understanding between the two countries. It is an interesting consequence of the friendship that had existed that Talleyrand was chosen partly because

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Lord Minto*, Vol. II. p. 72. Comp. “Fitzwilliam has Cazalès and the Bintinnayes to dine with him on Tuesday” (*Burke Corr.*, Vol. III. p. 434).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 470.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 424.

<sup>5</sup> *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. II. p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> Evidently the Prince of Wales, as he paid two visits to Brighton (Lord Sydney to Earl Cornwallis, *Cornwallis Corr.*, Jan. 27, 1790).

<sup>7</sup> Dumont, *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, p. 248.

<sup>8</sup> Lévis, *Souvenirs*, and *Burke Corr.*, Vol. III. p. 444.

of an acquaintance with Pitt in 1783, and that it was originally proposed to send Biron with him on account of his wide friendships in England.<sup>1</sup> A similar application of past acquaintance had been made by Pitt in 1790, when he sent Hugh Elliott to induce Mirabeau to persuade the Assembly to desert the family compact over the question of Nootka Sound. Elliott and his brother had known Mirabeau since their boyhood, and the friendship between him and the Elliott family had been renewed in 1784, when he visited Sir Gilbert at Bath.<sup>2</sup>

Curiosity attracted many Englishmen to Paris during the earlier scenes of the Revolution, and to the accounts of some of them we owe some of the most picturesque pictures of revolutionary France. Their enjoyment of Paris was not always without alloy, a fact which gradually deterred most Englishmen, except the thorough-going democrats, from risking themselves. In August 1790 the Duke of Argyle arrived home, after having had his chaise pelted and the coronet over his arms rubbed out, and Mrs. Damer in May 1791 had to submit to the embraces of the Dames de la Halle. Otherwise, it was comparatively easy to travel in France until after the fatal August 10, 1792, the tendency being to regard Englishmen with favour. On September 2 we find Mr. Lindsay remarking that Lord Kerry and "many English who are here" are unable to obtain passports, in consequence of the quarrel between the Municipality and the Assembly.<sup>3</sup> After the September massacres the only English to be found in Paris are those who, like Paine and Priestley, were elected to the Convention and were violent friends of the Revolution. "The party of conspirators here have now formed themselves into a society," writes Colonel Monro under date of December 17, 1792,<sup>4</sup> and this society had met on the previous day to receive a brotherly kiss from the Municipality, a ceremony to which the various

<sup>1</sup> Gower, *Dispatches*, p. 150, and Dumont, *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Gower, *Dispatches*, pp. 38-40, and Minto (*Life and Letters*), Nov. 19, 1783, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Lindsay, *Dispatches*, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> This group has been examined most carefully by J. G. Alger in the *English Historical Review*, Vol. XIII. p. 672.

deputations from English revolution societies had frequently submitted. After January 1793, and the outbreak of war, Paris is closed to English, except in the case of such as have definitely thrown in their lot with the French nation.

## § 2. *Changes in English Society*

The resemblance between French and English Society in 1789 is so great that all the salient characteristics of the one reappear in the other, and the sentimentality, the love of the marvellous, the immorality, and the literary tastes of the French are equally in evidence on this side of the Channel. The tendency to imitate the manners of France was viewed with dislike by most respectable people, and it was observed that those who did so became effeminate, dissipated and idle.<sup>1</sup> Miss Mary Townshend writes in 1778, "I should like to lay an embargo on my countrywomen, too, for in general their excursions to Paris do no good, either to themselves or to their country."<sup>2</sup> Andrews, again, is certain that the "frequent tours to France, of late years become so frequent, have produced no good to this country."<sup>3</sup> Certainly many French customs and habits became popular among the English who frequented Paris. Mrs. Miller at Batheaston imitated the *bouts-rimés* she had seen abroad;<sup>4</sup> ladies of fashion indulged the exaggerated taste for rural pursuits: "Lady Craven gave a tea-drinking last night at a sort of thatched house she has built upon the banks of the Thames," writes Storer to Carlisle. "She has made her house look as if it was built upon an ait, having surrounded it entirely with willows."<sup>5</sup> There is the same wine-drinking,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sinclair's Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Jesse's *Selwyn*, Oct. 4, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> *French and English Ladies*, p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> Walpole: "They hold a Parnassus fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes." *Bouts-rimés* were popular in Paris, and considered so characteristic that Catharine of Russia asked the Prince de Ligne for a specimen (*Lettres à Mme. Coigny*).

<sup>5</sup> *Castle Howard MSS.*, Storer to Carlisle, 1781, p. 508.

<sup>6</sup> In six years the import of French wines rose from 100,000 gallons to 683,000.

the homely ale of the past having succumbed under the combined influence of French example and the Commercial Treaty. The late hours which the Parisian Society of the 'sixties had kept is a feature of the 'eighties in England; "Nobody goes to Ranelagh till the music is over."<sup>1</sup> In other respects the fashions which France had adopted flourished here with renewed vigour. Gambling is still in vogue to such an extent that the market is over-stocked with bankers; even the ladies openly avow it, "Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, Lady Hobart, Lady Strutt and Mrs. Archer,"<sup>2</sup> and the King's brother, the Duke of Cumberland, keeps a bank. The Prince of Wales' life of scandal sets an example which private folks speedily follow. "It was curious to observe," writes Storer from Brighton in 1788, "at the playhouse the climax of immorality from the lowest to the highest ranged round the boxes."<sup>3</sup> English Society could not, however, succeed in establishing anything analogous to the *salon*. Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Ord, Mrs. Vesey and others indeed set up *bureaux d'esprit* in imitation of those they had seen in France. "There," says Wraxall, "they entertained the *litterati* of both sexes: Mrs. Thrale, Johnson, Garrick, Dr. and Miss Burney, Walpole, Reynolds, the Duchess of Devonshire and the Duchess of Portland," but he admits that these "blue-stocking assemblies" were more or less failures. Another attempt of the same kind was the Coterie, a club whose fundamental regulation was that the men should elect the women and vice versa. In the list of its original members are found the names of Selwyn, Fox, Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Crewe, Mrs. Pitt, Crawford, Walpole, Lord March, Mrs. Damer, Miss Lloyd, Colonel St. John, Lord Hertford, and the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, all of whom had visited France before this date, while the admission of several French, like M. and Mme. du Chatélet, Mlle. de Villegagnon and others, suggests the origin of the inspiration.<sup>4</sup> From the little

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, *Letters*.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliott*, Vol. II. p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Oct. 9, 1788.

<sup>4</sup> For the list see *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1770, p. 415. Walpole

that is heard of it afterwards, however, it seems to have languished to complete extinction. The Picnic Club was another attempt on the same lines avowedly adopted from France, the suggestion originating at a party of Lady Allina Buckinghamshire's.<sup>1</sup> Each guest brought his own share of the viands, but it appeared to have owed its temporary success mainly to the French vivacity of its founder, Le Texier. Despite the failure of these attempts to remove the isolation of the sexes, the literary spirit of the French women infused itself into England, and by 1789 there were many intelligent and intellectual women outside the rank of the Blue Stockings. According to Miss Berry, the introduction of a taste for literature and art was due to Walpole: "A fashion arose which encouraged occupation and mental acquirements," she says, "and deprecated trifling or popular amusements,"<sup>2</sup> and of this fashion the sculptures of Mrs. Damer, the mosaic flowers of Mrs. Delany, the wood-carving of Miss Boyle and the paintings of Lady Diana Beauclerk are the pioneers. Franklin says that there was no capital town in Europe without a French bookseller's shop corresponding with Paris.<sup>3</sup> French plays and pamphlets were freely sold in England, and the extent of the knowledge of French possessed by the English aristocracy may be gauged by the frequency with which one and all intersperse their private correspondence with snatches of French idiom.

Thus English Society and French Society have—what one would naturally expect—grown very much alike. Where a difference is to be seen is rather in the middle classes, the essential element of each nation. Voltaire described the English as like a hogshead of beer, the top of which is froth, the bottom dregs, and the middle excellent;<sup>4</sup> and of these three the froth had developed a marked resemblance to its fellow froth in France. On the other hand, the English country farmers, busied with their estates, had no parallel

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mentions it in the same year. A comparison of the list with the names in Appendix A is interesting.

<sup>1</sup> Angelo, Vol. I. p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, Vol. II. p. 353

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II. p. 5; Vol. I. p. 344.

<sup>4</sup> Moore, Letter XXIX.

outside the *noblesse*, and the crowd of English merchants, now on the crest of a wave of prosperity, show no likeness to the discontented and restless bourgeoisie of France, vaguely longing for a liberty they did not understand. Of the assimilation of the upper classes there can be no doubt. "I repeat it," says the Prince de Ligne, "Society and all countries each day resemble one another more."<sup>1</sup> Arthur Young makes the same remark: "Europe is now so much assimilated that if we go to a house where the fortune is fifteen or twenty thousand a year, we shall find more similarity than a young traveller is prepared to look for."<sup>2</sup>

This resemblance of manners and morals was partly responsible for the anxiety with which Pitt and Burke watched the growing proselytism of Jacobin doctrines: if the soil had proved fruitful in France, there was the possibility that a similar soil might yield with equal abundance here. It is the theme of one of Burke's denunciations: "France has always more or less influenced manners in England; and when your fountain is choked up and polluted, the stream will not run long, or not run clear, with us, or perhaps with any nation."<sup>3</sup>

### § 3. *The Attitude of Englishmen, 1792*

Nothing can be more evident than the fact that at certain phases in its progress, travellers in France were curiously susceptible to catch the blind faith in human perfectibility and the glorious belief in the brotherhood of humanity that ennobled even the mistakes of the *Assemblée Nationale*, many of whom, unconverted by the event, retained even in exile this captivating enthusiasm. "We were recognised as Englishmen," wrote Rigby, "we were embraced as freemen: 'for Frenchmen,' said they, 'are now free as

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Tours in France*, Vol. I. p. 96. He says of Liancour, "The mode of living and the pursuits approach much more to the habits of a nobleman's house in England than would commonly be conceived."

<sup>3</sup> *Reflections on the French Revolution*, p. 99 (Scott Library edition).

yourselves. Henceforward no longer enemies, we are brothers.' We caught," he adds, "the general enthusiasm."<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's experience was much the same—

"All hearts were open, every tongue was loud  
With amity and glee; we bore a name  
Honoured in France, the name of Englishmen,  
And hospitably did they give us hail  
As their fore-runners in a glorious course.

. . . . .  
My heart  
Responded, 'Honour to the patriot's zeal!  
Glory and hope to new-born liberty!'"<sup>2</sup>

Hence, during the last six months of 1792, when the Revolution entered on its republican phase, very general alarm of the infectious nature of Jacobinism seems to have been felt by the governing classes in England. The decrees of November 19 and December 15 put the climax to this alarm. England was full of refugees, many of whom were imbued with the principles which had led to the Revolution. Societies for constitutional reform existed at Norwich, Sheffield, London and elsewhere;<sup>3</sup> deputations to the Convention came from Derby and Manchester,<sup>4</sup> and numerous English were known to have entered into the service of France;<sup>5</sup> some of the regiments, like the Scots Greys and the Guards, were stated to be disaffected;<sup>6</sup> and most important of all, Jacobin emissaries were busy in Ireland.<sup>7</sup> Individual instances of conversion to Jacobinism were recorded, in some cases among men of standing. "Think of Lord Palmerston being a convert," writes Burke; "the success

<sup>1</sup> p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Prelude*, Book VI.

<sup>3</sup> *Dropmore MSS.*

<sup>4</sup> *Dispatches of Earl Gower* (Browning), Dec. 21, 1792, p. 263, and Dec. 31, p. 269.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Monro's dispatch, Sept. 22, p. 256.

<sup>6</sup> At Cooper's speech at Manchester some officers of the Scots Greys were present (Buckingham to Grenville, *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. III. p. 328). "Some of the younger officers of the Guards have held improper language (Buckingham to Grenville, *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. II. p. 349). Militia regiments were rumoured to be tainted.

<sup>7</sup> "If they (Sheares and McDonald) cannot succeed in breeding disturbance in Ireland . . ." Monro, Jan. 21, 1793, p. 282, *Dispatches of Earl Gower*. See also Burges to Grenville, *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. II. p. 328.

of the propaganda is incredible.”<sup>1</sup> Lord Doer, a young Scotsman, returned from France convinced that the best service he could do his country was to inoculate it with these principles;<sup>2</sup> Erskine declared his intention of wearing, even in the House of Commons, a coat of the Jacobin colours, with its inscription “Vivre libre ou Mourir”;<sup>3</sup> young men like Lord Lorn wore their hair cut short in imitation of the manners of Paris;<sup>4</sup> converts to Jacobinism were expelled from coffee-houses for inculcating the principles of France;<sup>5</sup> even the *émigrés*, as we have seen, speculated on the probability of the success of the propaganda. Lord Sheffield writes from Sussex, “There is a great deal more of French Jacobinism and of Thomas Paine in this un-manufacturing and out-of-the-way county than you would have imagined.” Of Suffolk Fanny Burney says in her diary, “There are innumerable democrats assembled, among them the famous Thomas Paine, who herds with all the farmers that will receive him and there propagates his pernicious doctrines.”<sup>6</sup> Everywhere in the country people are out of humour with crowned heads. “I am very much afraid that Paine’s rascally book has done much mischief,” writes Storer, while Lord Henry Spencer talks of the “desponding way in which people think and talk.”<sup>7</sup> Men like Lord Auckland and Burke, who realised early the essential resemblances which long association had developed between the English and French manners in the higher circles, watched these successes of the Jacobin doctrines with an anxiety which all their faith in the real stability of the English nation could not quite allay. Even in 1789 Selwyn had, in a letter preserved in the *Castle Howard MSS.*, hinted at the possibility of a revolution at home. “It is such a conflagration that the very sparks from it may chance

<sup>1</sup> *Burke Corr.*, Vol. III. p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> Dumont, *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*.

<sup>3</sup> Romilly, Vol. I. p. 408.

<sup>4</sup> Walpole, *Letters*, Vol. XV. p. 35, and *Life and Letters of Lord Minto*, Vol. I. p. 394.

<sup>5</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 446.

<sup>6</sup> *Diary*, Vol. V. p. 302.

<sup>7</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 471.

to light upon our own heads.”<sup>1</sup> Burke’s letters contain numerous expressions of this fear, which led him to that crusade against the Revolution with which his later years were bound up. “I feel as an Englishman great dread and apprehension,” he writes, “from the contagious nature of these abominable principles and vile manners,”<sup>2</sup> and again, “It is not the enmity, but the friendship of France that is truly terrible. Her intercourse, her example, the spread of her doctrines, are the most dreadful of her arms.”<sup>3</sup> Although Lord Auckland, perhaps the most distinguished diplomatist of his time, and certainly one who, from his acquaintance with France, would carry authority, is convinced “that the good part of the nation predominates,”<sup>4</sup> yet he writes, “The extravagance and profligacy of their doctrines have not yet affected us materially, but I dread them as I would the plague in my neighbourhood, and think it a *reasonable* probability that I may live to see all England in a state of frenzy and ferocity, tending fast to the ancient barbarism. *Many of the present habits and usages of English Society, and much of the Parliamentary language and measures, appear to me calculated for the levelling system.*”<sup>5</sup> The exact necessity of the war is a point rather difficult, at this distance of time, to determine. The Duke of Grafton, a man who, from the revelations in his *Autobiography*, appears sincerely anxious for his country’s prestige, speaks of it as “a war which I shall always execrate as unnecessary.”<sup>6</sup> To Canning, on the other hand, Pitt is “the pilot that weathered the storm.”<sup>7</sup> It seems pretty well established that Pitt was for a long time sincerely anxious for peace: the extracts quoted by Lord Rosebery sufficiently prove that he was so disposed, at any rate, up to November 1792.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Castle Howard MSS., Aug. 1789, p. 663.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence*, Vol. III. p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, to Grenville, Aug. 18, 1792.

<sup>4</sup> *Auckland Corr.*, May 1, 1792.

<sup>5</sup> *Dropmore MSS.*, Vol. II. p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> P. 382. Compare also Sir William Anson’s note.

<sup>7</sup> See *Selections from the Anti-Jacobin* (Methuen), p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> Rosebery, *Pitt*, pp. 125–128.

It must, however, be remembered that Lord Rosebery dates the commencement of Pitt's alarm from December,<sup>1</sup> and it is incredible that the man who shuddered at the Birmingham daggers should have received unmoved the alarmist reports of his lieutenants. To me it seems most probable that such language, held by men so distinguished as Burke and Lord Auckland, and backed by the numerous examples of disaffection which the assiduity of his brother, the Marquis of Buckinghamshire, was perpetually collecting, had their effect on Grenville and, through him, on Pitt, however desirous the Ministry might have been to maintain peace; and the real cause of the war seems to have been as much the conviction that security lay in open hostility as the ostensible *raisons d'être*, the question of the Scheldt and the execution of the King. Certainly the expressions of dread cease to a great extent after its outbreak. As the Revolution gradually changed its form, and power fell into the hands of the municipalities and the mob, the sympathy which the English nobility felt for their friends in France outweighed every other consideration, and every epithet of horror or abuse was employed to describe the French. To Burke, the leader of the crusade against it, the Revolution is the "brutal tyranny of a ferocious and atheistic populace," or "the alembic of Hell"; in Walpole's eyes there is neither substantive nor epithet to describe the horror the French have excited; they have "blasted and branded Liberty"; to Cornwallis "they are butchers and cannibals"; to Lord Auckland they are a "nation of unchained devils"; to Dr. Burney they are "wild beasts." In Englishmen who knew the pedigrees of the French families as well, or often better, than they knew their own, each fresh tale of murder stirred up feelings of anger and indignation. "Eleanor and I," writes Lord Auckland, "were so familiarised with all the scenes which have gone forwards, by having travelled so much through the provinces, by having lived so much with the unfortunate prisoners of the Temple, by knowing person-

<sup>1</sup> Rosebery, *Pitt*, p. 166.

ally many of the victims to the late atrocities, and by having lived in friendship and correspondence with some of them to the last hour, that our life is embittered by the details we receive." <sup>1</sup> Lord Auckland, of course, by reason of his long residence in France, had an unusually close acquaintance with the French nobility, but there were many Englishmen who had lived on such terms of intimacy with many of the victims of the September massacres as to be almost equally susceptible to the horror of that atrocity. On the whole, in fact, English sympathy seems to have been mainly with the sufferers in the Revolution. If Paine's book was popular, so was Burke's. It required the most active and vigilant attention of Government to prevent the people falling everywhere upon the French federations in 1791. At the first news of the King's escape the joy in London, according to Burke, was universal: "One saw everywhere the people stopping one another in the streets and mutually felicitating each other on that event." <sup>2</sup> The tears which Burke confesses that his picture of the contrast between the past glories and present fall of Marie Antoinette drew from his eyes in 1790,<sup>3</sup> were drawn from many who had previously been impassive at the news of her trial and untimely end. "If money could have served her," wrote Walpole, who admitted that she was never for three minutes out of his head, "£100,000 would have been subscribed in an hour in Lloyd's Office-house." <sup>4</sup> These feelings the presence of the *émigrés*, often in want and destitution, and in receipt of daily news from France, helped to confirm. "I have been very much with the wretched fugitives at Richmond," writes Walpole; "to them the escape from Varennes is perfect despair, besides trembling for their friends at Paris." <sup>5</sup> There can be little doubt that the natural feelings of horror which the proceedings at Paris excited, were heightened by the desperate

<sup>1</sup> *Cf. Dropmore Corr.*, Vol. II. p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence*, Vol. III. p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Francis, Feb. 20, 1790.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, Vol. XV. p. 243.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

plight and grief of so many *émigrés* whom the English aristocracy counted as friends, and that it was partly to the existence of such sentiments, quite as much as to the fact that it was a battle of ideals, that the bitterness with which Englishmen regarded their antagonists during the ensuing war is due.

#### § 4. *The Revolutionary Spirit in England and France*

If the French Revolution is to be regarded as the culmination of a wide universal movement in search of new ideals of life, it must at first sight be a matter for some surprise that the efforts of the English democrats received as little support from the masses of the nation as they did. For though the country districts in France were in many places wretchedly poor, yet it must be remembered that the focus of discontent was Paris, and that the bourgeois classes of that and the other towns of France had enjoyed ten years of considerable prosperity. Even as early as 1775, Walpole had noted that Paris was much improved in buildings, and that twenty new streets with gardens and arcades gave ample evidence of growing prosperity.<sup>1</sup> The crowds of visitors from all the countries of Europe had given an impetus to trade in articles of luxury,<sup>2</sup> the ports were realising the value of the new connection with America, and though some of the northern towns like Abbéville and Amiens were suffering under the Commercial Treaty, others like Bordeaux had thriven on the great increase of wine-drinking in England.<sup>3</sup> Arthur Young, indeed, estimates that the wine districts yielded an average profit of from 7 to 10 per cent.,<sup>4</sup> and he notes, too, the general rises in the prices of land.<sup>5</sup> Yet it was the very classes that were reaping the benefit of increas-

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, Vol. IX. p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson, Vol. II. p. 95: "The workmen of Paris are making rapid strides towards the English perfection."

<sup>3</sup> A. Young, Vol. I. pp. 5, 6, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. X.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 441.

ing trade that engineered the Revolution and lighted the flame that fired the country districts. If we compare England with France, we find the same rapid growth of commerce, despite the disasters of the American War. Jefferson, in writing from London in 1786, said that he could write volumes on the improvements he found making and made in the arts.<sup>1</sup> The figures quoted by Arthur Young bear testimony to the flourishing condition of the merchant classes, the value of England's exports to France in 1787 being double those of 1786, and eight times as great as in 1769.<sup>2</sup> Yet the merchant class in England was, unlike that of France, wholly contented with the existing system, though many would doubtless have welcomed electoral reform. We can ascribe the difference only to social conditions: the bourgeois of France was writhing under the lash of an inequality which he felt all the more as his wealth increased, and which was not disguised by the ease with which he could purchase an office granting exemption from the heavier taxes. On the other hand, in England at the time of the Gordon Riots, Walpole can write, "Almost all party is melted into a mass of bullion loyalty,"<sup>3</sup> and, in fact, during the whole of this factious period we can detect no signs of any tendency on the part of any reputable class to lawless rebellion. Moreover, at the time when the Revolution broke out, the middle classes were in the grip of the religious revival, and the influence of the evangelical clergy to be found in so many parishes was exerted to repress any signs of political upheaval.<sup>4</sup>

But the question has another bearing—the danger of permitting the reforming ideas of the time to obtain any footing. The movements in favour of the emancipation of the slaves and of electoral reform were rigidly repressed

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson, Vol. II. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> A. Young, Vol. I. p. 500.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, Vol. XI. p. 232. Although the Wilkes riots may have appeared threatening, yet they seem to have been far from affecting the nation as a whole. Although Olney was only sixty miles from London, the inhabitants were ignorant of the whole story (Letter from Newton in *Dartmouth MSS.*).

<sup>4</sup> See letter of Rev. W. Jesse to Lord Dartmouth, 1791.

after the outbreak of the Revolution, lest their concession should awake revolutionary forces too strong for the Government to face. The experience of France had shown that the changes agitated by the liberal aristocracy and the discontented middle class had developed into a state of anarchy; but here the question narrows itself into a comparison of the condition of the lower and particularly of the agricultural classes. Arthur Young estimates the average wages of a workman in England as twenty pence, and in France as thirteen pence a day.<sup>1</sup> According to Jefferson, while the Englishman paid about one-third of his produce in rent, his French fellow paid one-half.<sup>2</sup> Both were burdened with heavy taxes, but while in England there was equality in their distribution, in France the exemptions threw the burden of the *taille* on the poor, and even a tax like the capitations, which professed to be impartially levied, was by the manner of its assessment unfairly distributed. The *métayer* system, upon which seven-eighths of the land of France were held, was productive of disastrous effects in the districts where it obtained, as is evident from the fact that it was in these districts that the Peasants' Revolt occurred. The accumulated mass of tithes, *corvées*, and *banalités* had reduced the country people to such a state of desperation, that when the discontent of the middle classes and the humanitarian enthusiasm of the Liberal nobility had started the Revolution, it was impossible to restrain the excesses of an irritated and ignorant peasantry. The same danger followed the introduction of revolutionary tenets into Ireland, where absentee landlords and rural penury had created a state of affairs not unlike that existing in France; but in England, where a rich and prosperous agriculture was the consequence of the personal interest taken by the nobility in the development of their estates, there appears to have been little danger that even if Pitt had yielded to the desire expressed by such societies as the Friends of the People, the granting of a

<sup>1</sup> A. Young, Vol. I. pp. 437 and 503.

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson, Vol. II. p. 10.

measure of electoral reform would have been followed by the scenes of anarchy and carnage that marked events in France.

There is a further aspect of the question, arising more from the natural character of the people than from the nature of their ideas. The men of 1789, though endowed with the best intentions, were peculiarly unfitted to effect the far-reaching reforms which the circumstances of France and the *cahiers* of their constituents demanded. To a want of experience in public affairs, all the more total because of the lack of political discussion in the provinces, they added that supreme faith in the power of reason, and of their own in particular, that marked the century. There was, in fact, nothing in the recent history of the royal ministries to suggest that it was impossible for an inexperienced man to undertake responsible duties. Calonne, without any training in accounts, accepted the Contrôle-Generale at a most critical time; Brienne, though he had never served in the army, succeeded the soldier Ségur as Minister for War; Court intrigue had almost invariably placed a man in office independently of his qualifications. Hence the mass of ambitious politicians found in the Third Estate possessed a supreme belief in their own capacity to deal adequately with a most involved financial problem, and further, to devise a constitution superior to any that the world had known; hence also, the decrees of the Constitutional Assembly are a curious medley of common sense and the wildest theory. In England the speculations of philosophers had always been tempered by the practical experience of trained politicians and of a public versed in affairs, and there can be little doubt that the fears expressed by the various members of the governing classes were exaggerated and the danger unreal. The real cause of the misfortunes of France was that an assembly of untrained legislators, bursting with the fervour of a long-pent enthusiasm for humanity, swept away the abuses, and with the abuses all form of government, before supplying an efficient substitute, and thus permitted power

to fall into the hands of less public-spirited municipalities, an event which could not have happened in a country like England, where concession to the ideals of the century would have been merely the development of an existing constitution along its natural lines.

## APPENDIX A

### ENGLISH VISITORS OF NOTE TO FRANCE, 1763-1778

1763. Duchess of Hamilton, Duke and Duchess of  
Ancaster, Hon. C. Cadogan, Mrs. Mack, Lord  
Coventry, Lord Holland, Lord Holderness, Gen.  
Clarke, Gibbon, Mrs. Montagu, Horne, Lord  
Palmerston, Wilkes.
1764. Earl of March, Geo. Selwyn, Barré, Wedderburn,  
Garrick.
1765. Lady Holland, Lady Louisa Conolly, Lady Sarah  
Bunbury, Lascelles, Lord W. Gordon, Walpole,  
Lord Ossory, Crawford, Grandey, Garrick, Horne,  
Duke of Richmond, Wilkes, Sterne, Foote, Sir  
Gilbert Elliot, Duke of Beaufort, James Barry.
1766. Sir C. and Lady Bunbury, Duke of Northumber-  
land, Mrs. Greville, Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards  
Earl of Liverpool), Sterne, Lord and Lady G.  
Lennox, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzroy, Lord Carlisle,  
Selwyn, Miss Lloyd, Adam Smith, Col. Gordon,  
C. J. Fox, Stephen Fox, Lord and Lady Fife.
1767. Lord Fitzwilliam, Duke of York, Walpole, Selwyn,  
Lord March, Lord and Lady G. Lennox, Lady  
Sarah Bunbury, Lady M. Coke, Lord Palmerston,  
Wm. Pars (the draughtsman), Mr. Wood (Under-  
Secretary of State), Lord Algernon Percy, Lord  
Carlisle, Pringle, Franklin.
1768. C. Churchill, Lord Clanbrassill, Lord Carlisle,  
Lady Pembroke, H. St. John, Sir John Dalrymple,  
General Irwin.
1769. C. J. Fox, Crawford, General Irwin, Mrs. Chol-  
mondeley, Lord Holland, Lord and Lady Dacre,  
Walpole, Duke and Duchess of Richmond, Lady  
Orford, Mrs. Hart, Mr. Stuart.

1770. Dr. Burney, Lady Mary Coke, Sir H. Clinton, Lord Edward Bentinck, Duchess of Northumberland.
1771. C. J. Fox, Fitzpatrick, Spencer, Lady M. Churchill, Shelburne, Lord Findlater, Walpole, Lady Barrymore, Lord Edward Bentinck, Mrs. Abingdon (the actress), Foote, Lord and Lady Albermarle, Lord Villiers, Lord Tyrconnel, Lady Buck, Lord Huntingdon, Lord Grantham, Mr. Robinson.
1772. Crawford, Mrs. Damer, Duke and Duchess of Manchester, Mrs. Pitt.
1773. Burke, Mrs. Crewe, Lady Georgina Spencer, Lord Dalrymple, Mr. Fawkener, Crawford, Lord Cholmondeley, Duke of Gloucester, Capt. Jarvis, Lord Massarene, H. Angelo, Lady Lambert, Mrs. G. Pitt, Lady Mary Coke, Burges.
1774. Lord Southampton and his wife, Lord Mansfield, Shelburne, Lady Harriet Stanhope, Lady Ailesbury, General Conway, Mrs. Damer, Lord Haddington, Lord Cholmondeley, Foote, Rowlandson, Priestley, Mrs. Hart, Duke of Dorset, Duchess of Northumberland, Lord Mahon, Lady Berkeley.
1775. Walpole, Lord Barrymore, Lady M. Coke, H. Greville, Lady H. Stanhope, Lord Coleraine, Crawford, Lord Duncannon, Viscount Lewisham, Dr. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Thrale.
1776. Lady Dunmore, Duke of Richmond, Duchess of Leinster, Mr. Ogilby, Mr. and Mrs. Bingham (Earl of Lucan), Mrs. Montagu, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton (from Naples), Fox, Greville, Franklin, Elliot, Lady Harriet Vernon.
1777. Duke of Richmond, Gibbon, Dalrymple, Mrs. Macaulay, Crawford, Richard Oswald.
1778. Duchess of Leinster, Lady Louisa Conolly, Mrs. Damer, Selwyn.

## APPENDIX B

## FRENCHMEN IN ENGLAND

*Men of Letters, etc.*

- 1763. Camus, Condamine, de la Lande.
- 1764. Helvetius.
- 1768. Chevalier de Chastellux.
- 1769. Baron d'Holbach.
- 1772. Morellet.
- 1776. M. and Mme. Necker, Suard.
- 1777. Beaumarchais, Raynal, Grimm.
- 1783-4. Brissot, Morellet, M. and Mme. Roland.
- 1785. Mme. de Genlis, Mirabeau.
- 1788. M. de la Lande.

*Noblesse*

- 1763. M. d'Uson, M. de Fleury, Mme. de Boufflers, Duc de Nivernois.
- 1764. M. Elie de Beaumont.
- 1765. M. de Lauraguais, Comte de Caraman.
- 1766. M. de Lauraguais, M. de Lillebonne, Duc de Croÿ, Duc de Havre, M. de Fitzjames.
- 1767. Duc de Lauzun, Duc de Fronsac.
- 1769. Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Chevalier de l'Isle, M. de Maltête (President of Parlement), M. de Vitre.
- 1771. Duc de la Tremouille, Duc d'Arenberg, Mlle. de Villegagnon.
- 1773. M. de Lauraguais, Duc de Lauzun.
- 1774. M. de Septchênes (Secrétaire de Commandements).
- 1776. Prince de Salm, M. de Fitzjames, M. de Chimay, M. de La Fayette.
- 1777. Duc de Lauzun, Mme. de Jarnac, Mme. de Blot, M. de Schomberg.
- 1781. M. de la Borde, M. de Comeyran.

1783. Duc de Chartres, M. de Coigny, M. de Fitzjames,  
M. de Polignac, M. de St. Chamant, Baron de  
Montesquieu, Duc de Guines, Mme. de Cambis,  
Marquise de la Jamaïque.
1784. Comte de Ségur.
1785. Duc de Liancour.
1786. Mme. de Cambis.
1787. M. de St. George (the fencer).

## APPENDIX C

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED IN THE PREPARATION  
OF THIS THESIS*Original Memoirs, Correspondence, etc.*

- ANGELO (H.). Reminiscences . . . . . 1904
- BARRIÈRE. Tableaux de genre et d'histoire peints  
par differens maîtres. (Letters of Chevalier  
de l'Isle to Prince de Ligne) . . . . . 1828
- BERRY (MISS M.). A Comparative View of the  
Social Condition of both Countries . . . . . 1844
- BESENVAL. Mémoires . . . . . 1805
- BRANCAS-LAURAGUAIS. Mémoire pour moi, par  
moi (Epître dedicatoire) . . . . . 1773
- BRISSOT (J. P. DE WARVILLE). Mémoires sur ses  
contemporains . . . . . 1830-2
- BURKE. Correspondence between 1744 and the  
period of his Decease, 1797, edited by Earl  
Fitzwilliam . . . . . 1844
- BURTON, J. H. Life and Correspondence of David  
Hume . . . . . 1846
- Letters of Eminent Persons to David Hume 1849
- CARIGNAN (H. T. L. DE), Princesse de Lamballe.  
Mémoires historiques . . . . . 1815

COKE (LADY MARY), The Letters and Journals of	1889
CORNWALLIS (CHARLES), 1st Marquis. Correspondence . . . . .	1859
CRAVEN (ELIZABETH), Baroness. Memoirs of the Margravine Anspach . . . . .	1826
CROÿ-SOLRE (EMMANUEL DE), Duke. Journal inédit . . . . .	1906
D'ARBLAY. Diary and Letters of Mme. d'Arblay	1843-6
DEFFAND (DU). Letters of the Marquise de Deffand to Hon. H. Walpole . . . . .	1810
DIDEROT. Mémoires, Correspondence et Ouvrages inédits . . . . .	1841
D'OBERKIRCH. Memoirs of the Baroness d'Oberkirch . . . . .	1852
DOURX. Essai historique et philosophique sur les principaux ridicules des différentes nations .	1766
DUMONT. Souvenirs sur Mirabeau . . . . .	1832
DUTENS. Memoirs of a Traveller in Retirement .	1806
EDEN (W.), Baron Auckland. Journal and Correspondence . . . . .	1860-2
ELLIOT (GILBERT), 1st Earl of Minto. Life and Letters, edited by Countess of Minto . . . .	1874
ELLIOTT (GRACE S.). Journal of my Life during the Revolution . . . . .	1859
ESPINASSE, Mlle. de L'. Letters (Bibliothèque Nationale edn.) . . . . .	
FRANKLIN (BENJAMIN). Private Correspondence	1817
Complete Works . . . . .	1806
GARAT. Mémoires sur M. Suard . . . . .	1821
GARRICK. The Private Correspondence of David Garrick . . . . .	1831
GENLIS (S. F. DUCREST DE ST. AUBIN), Mme. de. Memoirs . . . . .	1828

- GIBBON. Autobiography and Letters (World's Classics edn.) . . . . . 1907
- GOWER (G. G. L., Duke of Sutherland). The Dispatches of Earl Gower . . . . . 1885
- GRIMM (FRIEDRICH M. DE), Baron. Historical and Literary Memoirs and Anecdotes selected from the Correspondence of Baron de Grimm : D. Diderot . . . . . 1814
- HERVEY (LADY MARY). Letters . . . . . 1821
- JEFFERSON. Memoirs, Correspondence and Private Papers . . . . . 1829
- JESSE. George Selwyn and his Contemporaries . 1843
- LA FAYETTE (M.J.P.R.Y.G.M.), Marquis de. Memoirs, Correspondence, etc. . . . . 1837
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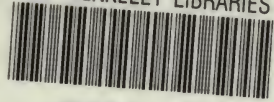
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